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LIFE OF THE
EARL OF IDDESLEIGH



SIR STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE BART. (aged 60)

From the painting by Edwin Long (R.A.)

NO. 1.

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*LIFE, LETTERS, AND
DIARIES*

OF

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE
FIRST EARL OF IDDESLEIGH

BY

ANDREW LANG

NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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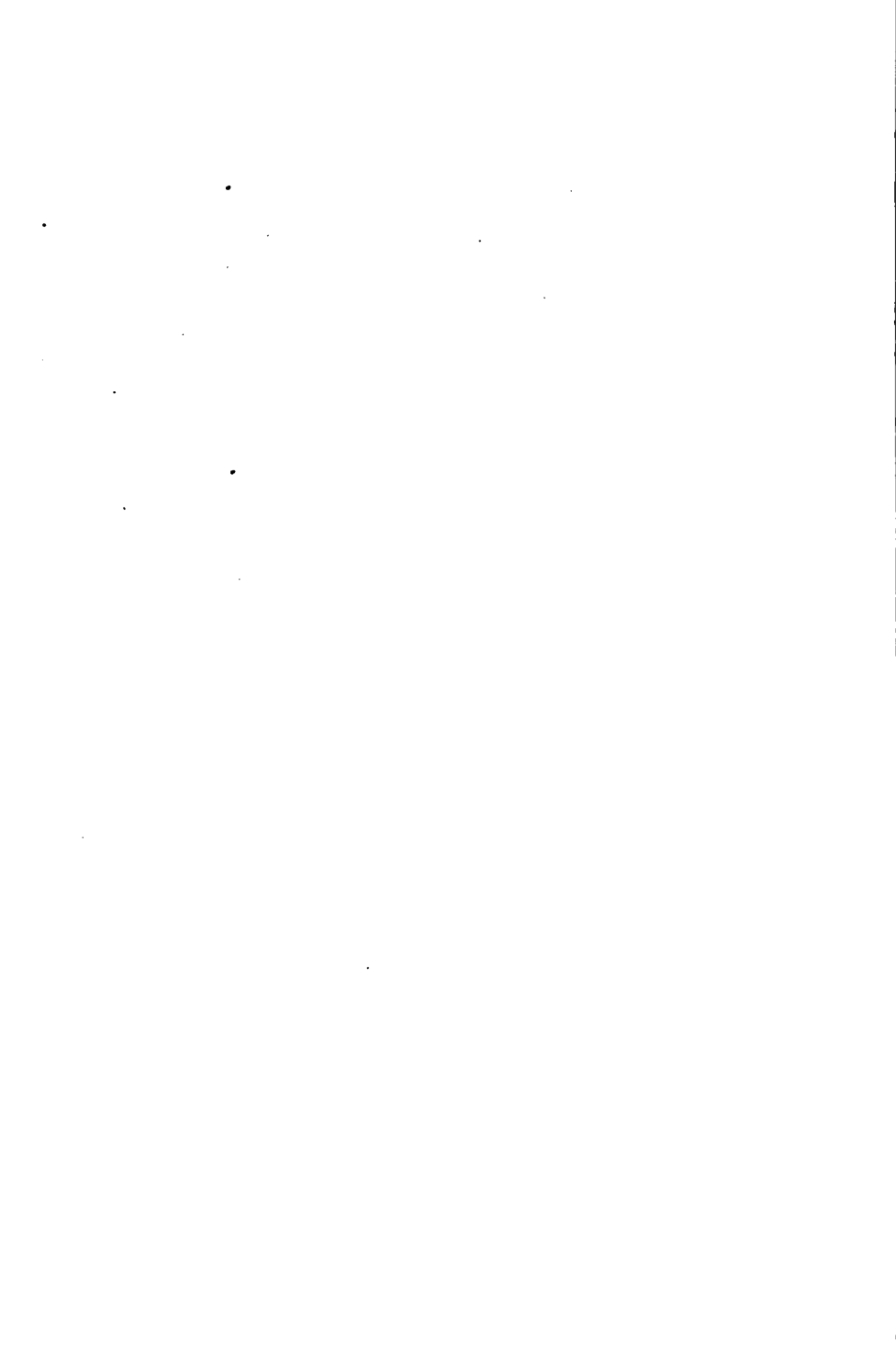
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INTRODUCTION.

IN an age when biographies are so generally written, when even the least distinguished lives are commemorated, there need be no excuse for a Life of Sir Stafford Northcote. His career shows how much a man may do, who has neither commanding genius, nor is born to great place, nor is animated by the restless eagerness of ambition. A country gentleman of no large fortune, of a family not illustrious though ancient, a politician without rancour or guile, a gentleman innocent of self-seeking, he reached almost the highest place in the service of his country; he discharged, as leader of the House of Commons, quite the most laborious functions in the world of politics; he smoothed, in his degree, the most complete and rapid of political transitions; he lived without a stain, and he died without an enemy. No ordinary character could have achieved all this, and yet no critic would call his character strange, unusual, beyond the course of nature. In truth he carried the common excellences and virtues to an uncommon pitch of perfection, and displayed them in a harmony as singular as amiable and admirable. His success was due to the simple habit of keeping himself at his best, not for reward, but for the sake of his country, and

his duty. His biographer, in all the mass of letters and diaries, has found no single touch nor trace of eagerness for his own advancement, of envy, of jealousy, of displeasure at the triumph of another, or of glory in his own. The Greek philosopher spoke of characters "naturally good," of men excellent, as it were by instinct or the grace of God, apart from reasoned reflection on conduct, apart from struggle after virtue—

"Glad hearts without reproach or blot,
Who do God's will and know it not,"

or, at least, know it not by any difficulty felt in the task. Such persons, says Plato, may be born into the worst as well as the best commonwealths. Their examples, showing the beauty of goodness all the more, by virtue of the unconscious ease with which they practise it, are fountains of light in the existence of men and of the State.

The life of Sir Stafford Northcote approached the type which the Greek has so affectionately described. He was born happy and good, skilled in the art of conduct, as others are born to excel in painting, poetry, or sculpture. But the excellence to which he attained, and which made his force, came more easily and readily than the other arts come to any man. There is in his career no period of storm and stress such as occurs in the experience of most. We never find him doubting nor dissatisfied, nor at all at a loss as to that which he should do. "Mankind," says Alexandre Dumas, "have for six thousand years been hooting at this divine drama of the world; for myself, I shall never cease to applaud it." Sir Stafford would probably never have expressed his thought about the world in this fashion, but the attitude of Dumas was his. He did not quarrel with life, nor with his part in the play: he was as ignorant of discontent as Nelson was of fear. His part he played to the very best of his

ability, but for its own sake, not for the sake of any prizes. In later life the part was not always that which he might have chosen, that for which he might have hoped; but he never for a moment allowed regret or ambition to divert his loyalty. No one could injure him by thwarting him: though he was not a reader of the Imperial Stoic, he unconsciously lived in the belief that he was not to be harmed by any man, nor by any influence from without. "This is the happy warrior" in the cruel war of politics, and this he was. His tranquillity was his strength, and this tranquillity could not exist in the same heart with love of self, with a selfish and exclusive ambition.

The familiar praise of "sweet reasonableness" or *ἐπιεικεία* may be justly applied to him. He was tolerant, fair, and just. His eminence was moral rather than intellectual; his strength was one of balance, not of brilliance of parts.

The intellect of Sir Stafford Northcote may perhaps best be described as ready at every need. It was admirably disciplined rather than vivid and original. His powers were always entirely at his command, so that whatever he could do, he could do with ease. His education and his taste gave him a wide command of literature, at once an ornament and a consolation. His education had made him acquainted with the best that has been written and said in the ancient and the modern European languages. His love of poetry was at once ardent and refined. Seldom has the same quality of spirit accompanied so much quantity of intellectual force ready to be employed in all the details of business. Perhaps only in Mr Gladstone, at least during our age, have the qualities of the man of letters and of the financier been so combined. As a rule they are divorced. What was peculiar to Sir Stafford, at once his force and his limitation, was the practical

character of his mind. He took theology as he found it, without questionings of that which is eternally inviting, and eternally refusing to gratify, our curiosity. He took politics as he found them, without deep or novel reasoning; without the advantages and without the drawbacks of too extended vision. His mind was entirely alien to metaphysics of all sorts; no man, it seems to his biographer, was ever less speculative. "A child of the idea" as the phrase runs, he was not. He had great capacity for business, great industry, though, like Scott, he regretted his own indolence; he had great readiness and clearness in financial statement. When pondering his Budgets he was as much at ease, enjoyed himself as much, as while turning off innumerable Latin verses when a boy at school (like Mr Reginald Cuff, he could make "forty in an hour"), or, in his own phrase, as when playing chess. Thus, as has been said, his intellect was ever his servant: it never carried him into rare heights or strange distances, like that unbroken steed of the soul in Plato.

Such a man, it need hardly be said, cannot be reckoned among the greatest of mankind. He was too much on the ordinary level of humanity for that, and his excellence was to do common things in an uncommon way. He neither was eloquent nor aspired to eloquence. He was logical, clear, candid, and impartial; as far as these virtues of speech go, he was also persuasive. He was humorous, and appreciated humour, but he had neither the melancholy nor the fantasy of the humorist. He was especially equable: there were no shining peaks nor unfathomed depths in his mind. His courage, physical and moral, was great and undoubted, except by those who mistake justice, forbearance, and kindness for lack of courage. He was not, however, combative, in an age of combat. Yet on various occasions, on one in particular, a turning-point in recent politics, his voice was for "the more spirited

course" as the better, when the voices of more ostentatiously combative men were for the less spirited course, and overbore his opinions. The mild, the half-hearted course was taken: it were better to have tried and to have been defeated. This was his counsel; it was overruled. But these things, and many others which illustrate his character, can at present only be stated, without proofs which the reserve of contemporary biography must decline to produce. He accepted the conditions of party warfare, and of other matters, as he found them in his day, and was loyal in all things, where his honour did not decline to follow, to his party leaders. This life of ours is a compromise, above all within the lines of party, and to compromises he was not recalcitrant.

The successes of his life, apart from what he certainly cared for least, his own party advancement, were of two kinds. In business he was unsurpassed. From his first work on the Navigation Laws to his conduct in negotiating the Washington Treaty, or to his last criticism of a Budget, his services were always inestimable. They were less showy, perhaps, than they were of true value to the State. His frankness, which did not harm his astuteness and clearness of vision—his admirable temper, and his good-humour, made him a master in all negotiations, whether foreign or domestic. His geniality and fairness, again, and his lifelong friendship with his early leader, the opponent of his later life, enabled him, as we have said, to ease the terrible strain of politics. The same qualities accompanied him, of course, in his discharge of local and personal duties as a magistrate, a landlord, a kinsman, and a friend.

His affections were immutable rather than picturesque: he was the most constant of friends, and the most trustworthy of allies. In his private friendship, it was his singular fortune to be attached with an almost equal affection to two men, in all respects each other's opposites,

Mr Gladstone and Mr Disraeli. The pain which political differences cause in private friendship was felt, and indeed once expressed by him, in language of emotion beyond what English reserve is often wont to employ. This is not a matter on which much should be said; but it may be stated that in the domestic affections and in some private friendships of Sir Stafford Northcote, the poetry of his nature declared itself, and was to be known by those who had the right to know it. His loyalty to his sovereign was "the constant service of the antique world."

Such, as one gathers from the remains of his life, was Sir Stafford Northcote. Perhaps his character would yield few secrets or none to a more minute research: it was all open to the sun; there were, apparently, no hidden folds and intricate passages in his nature. It was plain, manly, simple—untouched by any affectation, unembittered by any unfulfilled aspirations or desires. We may certainly call him happy.

The records of such a character, even when concerned with great affairs, cannot be among the most romantic. Neither can they possibly charm us, like the story of great genius, with its glance into the ideal and the unattainable, with its gloom and glitter, with the magic of its power over men and over the fortunes of nations. Sir Stafford was no heaven-born leader: he overcame no scarcely surmountable difficulties; he was the loyal servant of the State, he guided it towards no new destinies. It may even be said that his example of rectitude and true human charity is less enticing, because to him his conduct was so easy. When once he had passed out of the thoughtlessness of early boyhood, it seems as if, unlike the rest of us, he had to fight no temptations. In one of his letters he says that he is half ashamed of being so easily happy. But an example of happiness like his has in no time, and least of all in ours, been so common or

so conspicuous that we need regret his genius for felicity. It was really nothing short of genius, and to this he owed his freedom from temptations. He had no vague desires, no vain regrets: he lived in his work and in his home, undisturbed, as it were, by the passions. That "passionless bride, divine tranquillity," which the Roman poet so passionately and so vainly wooed, gave herself unbidden to him. We watch and envy him, whose nature made him a source of peace in warring times; we envy, but we cannot imitate. The gifts of character, of courtesy, of purity and peace which were his by nature, as the gifts of force and victory are in the lot of others, we can admire, and we can strive in some degree to approach; but, like any other natural endowments, they are not to be wholly won by discipline and labour.

The biographer has attempted here to give the sum of his impressions, and to offer the sketch of a character as an introduction to the record of a life. On the whole subject of biography it would not be difficult and it might be pleasant to write at length. In this, as in everything, the fashion of the world changes. To Plutarch but a few pages sufficed, and in them he drew his men—imperishable portraits. The life of Agricola, in the hands of Tacitus, fills but twenty folio pages, and yet Tacitus might easily have played the Boswell to his father-in-law. The ground that Izaak Walton occupied in his *Lives* was scarcely more spacious, and about our greatest name only a sheet or two of doubtful anecdotes survive. It was Boswell who began the new method of biography, and in Lockhart he has his one worthy disciple. To their method, or at least to Lockhart's, Mr Carlyle urged objections, asking for the picture of a man and not for the materials out of which a picture might be made. The taste of the age has preferred the array and accumulation of documents, of everything that can enable the reader to draw his own conclusions.

In compliance with custom, this book is composed, or compiled, out of letters, diaries, speeches, anecdotes, reminiscences. On any other principle it might have been brief indeed; but, even had it been deftly designed, much of personal and something of political history would have been omitted. Probably no biography, brief or copious, of Sir Stafford Northcote can greatly alter the general estimate of a character so pellucid, of a life in which subtlety can find so little to be subtle about. Sir Stafford was, happily, much more than a man of affairs—he was also a student: his interest in letters was vivid, and in letters whatever was finest in his intellect found congenial business. He touched other worlds than the political by his constant concern for all that is best and most enduring in literature. To the familiar air of his young studies he returned, to use his own happy phrase, like the medieval mariner who went round the world without knowing it, and found himself at last in a land where they spoke his own speech—in fact at home again. In literature, in the best literature, Sir Stafford was always at home, dwelling with Virgil and Shakespeare, Dante and Scott, Ford, Marlowe, and Molière. On this aspect of his life it has been a peculiar pleasure to dwell.

The biographer has been aided, in an unusual degree, and with no common kindness, by Lord Iddesleigh's family. His thanks are particularly due to the Dowager Lady Iddesleigh—by whose care all documents have been presented to him in the most serviceable shape—to the present Lord Iddesleigh, and to Sir Thomas Farrer. The biographer has also to thank Mr Alfred Haggard for much help with copious correspondence. In the present edition, a chapter on Lord Iddesleigh as a Leader in Parliament, originally composed by another hand, has been re-written, and letters from Mr Disraeli have been added.

In many places, above all in the story of the later years,

much of moment and interest has necessarily been omitted. Mr Carlyle has dispraised the idea that the feelings of living people should be spared, in memoirs of the recently dead. But he did not observe that, while the story remains for its date, with its own rendering of events, surviving contemporaries have no such comparatively permanent opportunity of telling their own tale, which may differ considerably, in colouring especially, from that which is told about them. George Sand has been accused of confessing the sins of her neighbours. If towards Lord Iddesleigh any persons sinned, or seemed to sin, in the official affairs of his closing days, they may make their own confessions. The least selfish of politicians would have been the last to desire discussion and debate over his grave—and that discussion, as usual, hot, passionate, and inconclusive. He who never grumbled shall not have grumbling done for him. The biographer may end in the words of Tacitus, as rendered by his old English translator, and may hope concerning his task, that “as being in discharge of duty, and carrying profession of kindness, it shall either abroad purchase praise, or be covered at least with some courteous excuse.” And, as the old translator renders his author, “if there be any place for the ghosts of good men, if, as wise men define, the soules of great persons die not with the body, in peace mayest thou rest, and recall us . . . to the contemplation of thy vertues, which are in no sort to be sorrowed for, or bewailed, but rather admired.”¹

¹ The Life of Julius Agricola. Written by Cornelius Tacitus. London: Mdcxxii.

LIFE OF THE EARL OF IDDESLEIGH.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

THE family of Northcot—or Norcot, as it was occasionally written in the seventeenth century—is of very old standing in Devonshire. The pedigree preserved at Pynes traces the history of the house to within half a century of the Conquest (1103), when Galfreidus de Northcote was “Northcote of that ilk,” holding the lands near Barnstaple, whence the family name is derived. A John de Northcote was sheriff in 1354. As new estates were acquired by marriage or purchase, the family frequently changed its seat. Under Mary Tudor we hear of “Norcot of Kyrto,” or Crediton, and this Walter Northcote was great-grandfather of the first baronet. The father of the first baronet was John Northcote, who was a justice at quarter sessions late in the reign of Elizabeth, and who survived till 1632. Mr A. H. A. Hamilton, in his ‘Note-Book of Sir John Northcote,’¹ suggests that the Parliamentary baronet’s politics may have been influenced by his father’s experience. He had been tried by the Star Chamber—

“*Probatus
Stellatâ camerâ,*”

and though he came “like gold out of the furnace,” the

¹ London, 1877, p. xii.

incident may have rankled. Mr Hamilton very plausibly guesses that Justice Northcote had been slack in collecting Ship-money in 1627. A curious family legend about his luck in cards seems (to the sceptical mind) possibly a mere myth invented to explain the designs on a decorated card-table, which must have been made long after the sods were over Justice Northcote. According to the story, Justice Northcote won the manor of Kennerleigh from a Mr Dowrish, at piquet, and the "hands" held are inlaid on the table.¹ Similar tables are common in Hampshire country-houses, and we may conclude that this Northcote obtained a traditional repute as a gambler merely because of the decorated card-table. This, at least, is a modern method of dealing with old beliefs, which may, after all, survive the method. The Justice had twelve sons, of whom John, the first baronet, was the eldest. He sat for Ashburton in the Long Parliament in 1640. His memory is preserved chiefly by the Note-Book he kept in the House in 1640 and in 1661. He died in 1676. On January 14, 1641-42, he spoke on a proposal to diminish the king's jealousies of the House, but was so interrupted that "he was fain to

¹ In a letter to his eldest daughter in 1877, Lord Iddesleigh thus describes the table: "When we were at Kennerleigh the other day, I went over to Dowrish to see the table. It is very curious; it is made of dark grey marble, with the cards and counters inlaid in white marble. It seems that the Dowrish (who was the dealer) held the four aces, the four kings, and the four queens, which certainly looked like a hand to win on. Our ancestor had knave, ten, nine, eight, seven in spades, the same in diamonds, and two other cards (ten of hearts and seven of clubs), and he had to count first; so it is easy to see that he got the point, and also two quints, and thus a repique, which would make him (according to our mode of reckoning) ninety-five before playing. He would count one more by playing the knave, but I don't see how he got beyond ninety-six, unless he had already marked for a *carte blanche*, of which there is no evidence. The markers on both sides stand the same, and are on this wise—

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      o           o
    o o         o o
      o         o
      o         o
    o o o o o   o o o o o
  
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Now you have a puzzle to puzzle your friends with. Perhaps the markers mean that each of the two players had already scored equally, and that it was not the beginning of the game."

give over before he had intended." Parliamentary manners, in those days at least, apparently, leaned towards the bearish. Sir John seems to have had an idea of crowning Charles II., then a boy. He is said to have commanded a regiment in the West during the first two years of the Rebellion. He was active in the defence of Plymouth, and took part in a battle where the Cornwall men ran away, and the Devonshire men were too neighbourly to pursue them hard. Like Dicæopolis of old in Aristophanes, Sir John tried to arrange a private peace between Devonshire and Cornwall. The House of Commons prevented this; but the scheme showed a spirit of compromise and goodwill, which became, perhaps, hereditary. He was once prisoner to the king's forces, was released, and laid down his arms after the passing of the Self-denying Ordinance. He represented Devonshire in the Parliament of Richard Cromwell. He opposed Cromwell's House of Lords. "I did fight against an exorbitant power in the king's hands, and I will fight against it to the last drop of blood, . . . whenever such power shall be set up, if it be to-morrow, and in whatever hands it be." He sat in the Convention Parliament, and appears to have welcomed the Restoration heartily. In later years he spoke always on the side of clemency and amnesty. As "an old man," he argued in defence of the interests of women voluntarily living apart from their husbands. His epitaph—he died in 1676—ran:

"Ita vixi ut non pudet vivere, non piget mori."

His son, Sir Arthur, signed the violent order against Nonconformists at the time of the Rye-house Plot. His second wife, from whom Sir Stafford Northcote descended, was a sister of Sidney Godolphin. The later ancestors, between the member of the Long Parliament and the statesman of yesterday, made no particular figure in history, and the honourable record of their days need not be dwelt on here.

Stafford Henry Northcote, best known as Sir Stafford Northcote, and at the end of his life first Earl of Iddesleigh, was born at 23 Portland Place on the 27th October

1818. According to a horoscope drawn before he entered Parliament, all his planets were in the ascendant, and the stars prophesied for him a career of success, despite "the contrary planet Saturn, which indicated ill-health and accidents." He was the eldest son of H. S. Northcote, eldest son of Sir Stafford Northcote, Bart., and his mother was Agnes Cockburn, daughter of Mr T. Cockburn. Through Miss Cockburn, Sir Stafford inherited Scottish blood, and was connected with a remarkable family and a romantic history. He had the blood of Border reivers in his veins. The Cockburns trace back to Piers de Cockburn, of that ilk, and of Langton, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Sir Stafford's mother descended from James Cockburn of Selburnrigg, whose grandson was a Cavalier, and was exiled under Cromwell. The most famous member of the house, in old times, was William Cockburn of Henderland, beside St Mary's Loch. This gentleman was beheaded by James V., at the time when Johnnie Armstrong also suffered. The tradition that Cockburn was hanged over his own gate is incorrect; he was beheaded "by favour of the king." The beautiful ballad makes his wife say—

"But think na ye my heart was sair
 When I happit the moul on his yellow hair?
 O think na ye my heart was wae
 When I turned about awa to gae?
 Nae living man I'll love again,
 Since that my lovely knight is slain;
 Wi' ae lock o' his yellow hair
 I'll chain my heart for evermair."¹

From his mother, whose diary contains a sufficient expression of her pious and amiable character, Northcote inherited that spirit of religion which is so visible in his early letters and in the peculiar form of concern with questions of theology which occupied his youth. A sketch of his early childhood by his grandmother, Lady Northcote, shows that he was not only a remarkable child (as

¹ Border Minstrelsy, 1833, vol. iii. p. 94. The House of the Cockburns of that ilk. By T. H. Cockburn Hood. Edinburgh, 1888.

all the first-born of all families are remarkable), but that he really was rather unusually quick and intelligent. Some children are born bookworms, and make themselves happy with the pictures in fairy tales even before they can read. It is recorded of the little boy, in December 1820, that he amused himself in the carriage by "reading 'Puss in Boots' and 'Mother Goose' by turns." That he actually studied these masterpieces is improbable or impossible; but he knew his letters before 'he was two, and could read a chapter in the Bible when he was four. Lady Northcote credited him with "a very strong imagination, which, however delightful, ought to be subdued as leading to further trouble." Mr Gladstone, later, made a similar criticism. This peril was avoided as is generally thought, and so was any risk of danger from the occurrence of "fits of passion" that in early childhood beset a temper naturally very sweet.

Mrs Northcote's diary contains the brief records of his infancy—a happy age passed in stormy times, when the affair of Queen Caroline and the earlier agitations for Reform were disturbing the land, and when mobs vexed the cities and terrified the gentry in their country-houses. Of all these troubles and rumours childhood is, fortunately, insensible; and when Stafford went to the Rev. Mr Roberts's school at Mitcham (afterwards removed to Brighton), he took with him a placid temper, and an eager, kindly spirit.

He was eight years old when he made this first, and commonly least agreeable, entrance into life. His very earliest letters reveal a contented heart and some sense of humour. The imagination, whose excesses were dreaded by his grandmother, had already flowered into a novel composed for his brother and sister (1824). This fiction contains the elements of all romance; and, in the very second sentence, we find a piece of wood which, when sat on by the heroes of the tale, turned into a trap-door, and opened the way into a subterranean staircase. The supernatural is then introduced with a rather lavish hand, for some sheep which alarmed the adventurers by screaming were changed into monkeys by a magician. Finally, a palace arose by magic, and disappeared as rapidly, leaving

six men and women and a thousand children ("some of them orphans") without house or home.

These were domestic recreations; but his first letter from school, in September 1826, proclaims him "very happy." At a rather later period he mentions an original and admirable philosophic system of his own for being "happier every day." In 1830 he displays an interest in politics, and proposes a short way with Radicals. "Tell Cecilia that I hear the Radicals are burning the farms at a terrible rate, so she had better get a bucket of water to put out the fire." The singular performances of a "new boy" are also recorded. This neophyte put his head through the carriage-windows as he was being brought to school, and next day repeated the exploit on the bedroom window, "cutting his throat, but not very much." In 1830, on the point of leaving Brighton, he anticipates flogging at Eton; nor was his forecast falsified. "I hear Mr Coleridge is terribly strict, and likes to get boys flogged." In spite of the high spirits which his boyish letters reveal, he retained, at a volatile age, his religious habits. A letter from Mrs Northcote, of 1830, tells how he and Carew, a schoolfellow, used to read the Bible to each other "in whispers." As to school-work, Mr Roberts's reports show that he was quick enough, finding "Bland's exercises too easy," but was rather casual and inattentive. His verses are said to be good, and he is beginning Sapphics. His English verses at this date (1830) seem creditable, though of course they imitate the moods of English heroic poetry. Writing on the battle of Philippi, he says:—

"The warlike hero fame and laurels sought;
The patriot for his country's freedom fought.
How changed the scene when Dian's silver beam
Shone through the darkness on the mountain stream!
The silvery waves were dyed with purple blood,
The dead had checked the progress of the flood."

There must have been fearful carnage.

A more ambitious and probably a voluntary effort is a drama on the "Return of Ulysses." By a singular deviation from Homer, the Wooers are invited to draw the bow

of Ulysses, and to shoot, not through the axes, but through a "beauteous ringlet" of Penelope's hair. There is a good deal of action in the piece, which remains a fragment, breaking off where the Wooers insult Ulysses at the feast.

In April 1831, Stafford Northcote went to Eton, to the house of the Rev. E. Coleridge. He was extremely fortunate in his tutor—a member of a family allied by ancient friendship with his own. Mr Coleridge took a careful and paternal interest in the development of the characters of his pupils. He was, though a schoolmaster, a person of humour and sympathy, and considerable bodily skill and address. Without any touch of the austerity of Dr Arnold, at that time ruling Rugby, and without any idea of leading the boys into the ways of "moral thoughtfulness," Mr Coleridge set before each of them a clear view of his duty, in a practical sense. He is described as "personally a great charmer"; and he had the habit, not over common in schoolmasters, of regarding the freaks of schoolboy spirits as absurdities rather than as high crimes and offences. Perhaps the tendency of Eton discipline at that date varied too much between applications of the maxim "boys will be boys" and applications of the birch. Goodall was provost, and the famous Keate was head-master. About Keate volumes have been written, and leave an impression that the soul of a martinet post-captain, of Smollett's date, informed the body of the fiery little flogging head-master. Hearing that a boy was addicted to excessive religiousness, "I'll flog him," said Keate; "it's all conceit." But it was not for this unusual offence that he not infrequently flogged Stafford Northcote.

The new boy, according to Mr Coleridge's letters to his father, brought from Brighton the essentials, but not the graces, of good scholarship. He entered the Lower Remove of the Remove. "This is as high as could be expected or wished." The custom of the school permitted no higher promotion. The earlier reports announce improvement in various ways; but there came a period of two years during which Stafford Northcote seems to have sown a kind of innocent wild oats. A "want of constant purpose was

complained of"—probably the boy was at the height of boyish high spirits, trailing his watch in the water behind his boat, and had not yet seen (not such an easy thing to see) what reason there is for application. Probably most of us remember such a period in our own lives. There is a date in the life even of a clever schoolboy, when school-work seems the abomination of desolation. One has not yet learned to feel the charm of the ancient literatures; we have not yet heard Circe's song, and are only toiling,

διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην,

through the thicket of verbs and cases. Meanwhile cricket and the river and a hundred amusements are calling to us, and who can be deaf to their voices? It is no great crime to have listened to them; but he who follows pleasure at school too eagerly very seldom recovers himself, or learns there the lesson of industry.

The kindness of Colonel Anstruther Thomson furnishes a few notes on Stafford Northcote at a date when he and Northcote were

"Two lads, that thought there was no more behind
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,
And to be boy eternal."

Their friends were "Lobby" Carew, afterwards Lord Carew, Herries, Farrer, and "Keggs" Gisborne. Northcote's name was "Tab," derived from a singing-boy whose fair hair resembled his. "I remember Gisborne and Northcote in the playing-fields, hurling long reeds for javelins at each other, quoting Homer, and fancying themselves Grecian warriors." Much in the same way, Shelley is said to have spouted hexameters after the first, and successful, round in his one fight at Eton: after the second round he fled, like Hector about the walls of Troy. In winter they "toodled"—that is, chased small birds in the hedges till they were blown, and then captured them. Northcote was in the "Victory." As to lessons, "I," says the Colonel, "was very idle, and had no turn for doing

verses. Northcote could compose them almost as quickly as he could repeat them, and used to help me with them."

One very hot morning I came in, and found "Tab" at breakfast in his shirt-sleeves, and his coat hanging over my chair. "Tab, take your coat off my chair." "I shan't," quoth he. "If you don't, I'll chuck it out of the window." "Shan't," he repeated. Away went the coat, and floated into the tutor's garden. Unfortunately it was Monday morning, and Tab said, "You may finish your verses for yourself." That week the verses were a very inferior lot, and my tutor was very much puzzled to know the reason why. However, we soon made it up, and were better friends than ever. My tutor was always afraid I should influence Northcote for evil, as I was very idle, and fond of field-sports.

We used to have card-parties, and sit on the floor playing at *vingt-et-un* for halfpence. Once Northcote had to go away in the middle of a game, having lost about two shillings. He handed over to the boy who took his place a sheet of paper with these words: "Here is a schedule of my debts, and here is the sum of my possessions," giving him one halfpenny.

At other times we had singing-parties. A favourite song of Northcote's was called "The One-Horse Shay."

I left Eton at Christmas 1834.

In 1841 I was in the 13th Light Dragoons, and quartered at Exeter, and was very often at Pynes. Northcote's father and grandfather were both very kind to me. He was not at home, and I think was at that time private secretary to Mr Gladstone. I did not see him again for nearly thirty years. In 1871, when I was at Torquay, I met him out shooting with Sir Walter Carew at Hacombe. William Fortescue of Fallapit was also there: he had been at Eton with us, and was a great friend of Northcote's. I was several times at Pynes that winter. I and my second son were there for some festivities and a ball in Exeter, at which Northcote danced like a boy. The next morning he recounted his experiences of fox-hunting in America to my boy, in which the great merit of the chase was that the fox ran eight-and-twenty times round the same field!

Sir T. H. Farrer adds that nobody did so many verses for other boys, and that, through life, he was "always doing other boys' verses." The verses were not of the first quality, they were turned out "like tape off a reel." I am reminded of an Etonian friend who did another

boy's verses, giving him the Latin, line for line, as he read out the English. And the other boy was detected, the poetry being obviously above his calibre.

Thanks chiefly to Mr Coleridge and to a certain Mr Carr, a clergyman of his acquaintance, Northcote ceased to live for mere amusement. Eton at that time, perhaps at any time, might easily be made a Castle of Indolence. For 670 boys there were then but ten assistant masters. The system of shirking was carried to primitive and almost prehistoric lengths. The history of shirking must be a long one. When the mother-in-law of an Australian black meets her son-in-law, she is expected to hide in the bush. But, if no bush nor other place of concealment be available, she may hold up a stick in front of her face, and is then technically regarded as hidden, and not to be recognised. In the same way at Eton, if a tutor met a pupil where no pupil should be, it was technically sufficient for the boy to hide, or "shirk" behind a lamp-post, and no notice was taken of the irregularity. Probably Stafford Northcote was more or less irregular in his earlier years at Eton. Sir Thomas Farrer remembers one cross-country expedition, wherein an essential part of Northcote's raiment—his trousers, indeed—was torn, and pinned up by Sir Thomas with thorns, so that the student was able to take an uneasy seat in chapel, without exciting remark. In a letter to Mrs Northcote (May 1831) Stafford observes, "I have been flogged three times—once for not being able to construe the Greek Testament, once for not knowing some questions about my map, and once for not going to my tutor in pupil-room after four." These were sins of omission. He adds, comfortingly, "Gisborne is my great *con*. He is one of the *literatissimi*, or very learned, into which I mean to get soon!" He is next found meditating a breakfast-party, and asking his grandmother for "some sock," which, being interpreted, means "a couple of chickens, a ham, and some marmalade." Presently he confesses, in the most amiable spirit, to "my incorrigible idleness and love of play." And the play had been worth

seeing, for Eton had beaten M.C.C., with the renowned Mr Ward, in the first innings. Stafford "has not had a fight in the playing-fields yet, but has seen several." "You generally," he remarks to his mother, "have two fellows to back you up and give you a knee, with a jug of water in case you faint." Fancy the pious and tender mother perusing these particular accounts of a son's education, stated in this oddly personal manner! Then we have the details of a rattling mill between Walsh and Bowler. Walsh did not get one hit in the face, but he cut his knuckles on Bowler's teeth—an accident most incident to fighting. The son adds that he "caught out Baring the other day, *mirabile dictu*." He was too short-sighted to be a cricketer, though his turn of speed was so great that he is said to have been chosen to run for boys in the eleven, who happened to be lamed. But a short-sighted man, however swift of foot, can hardly be a sound judge of a run. At hockey he excelled, thanks to his turn of speed. According to one letter (July 1831) Gisborne and Leicester are Northcote's "great *cons*." Baring is always in mischief, and being flogged. Northcote has just "done forty hexameters on the works of God"—a kind of Etonian and orthodox *De Rerum Naturâ*. An illustration, in the style of Mr Thomas Traddles, depicts "a fight in the playing-fields." We see the champions at rest on the knees of their respective backers; then there is a counter, both men getting home heavily; observe the anxiety of their seconds. Finally, a knock-down blow; seconds consoling the vanquished. *O si sic omnia!* and "what a pity that these fine ingenuous boys should grow up into frivolous members of Parliament!" At this period (July 1831) Stafford Northcote occupied the undistinguished place of "lag" in his form. But he was "hardly at all bullied, for most of the bullies are very stupid fellows, and I construe them," or "give them construes," as other grammarians might put it. Very early in the following half he "has not been flogged *yet*." In a year he gets into tails, and is "not much baited about *them*, but about my brass but-

tons." One of the fellows who messes with him "has got a fag, so we are getting fine and lazy." By February 1834, he announces that he has begun to do Greek verses—Wolsey's speech on fallen greatness in "Henry VIII." His tutor thinks that, if he works hard, he may get a scholarship at Christ Church in 1836. But greater schoolboy success than a scholarship at Christ Church awaited him. The beginning of 1834 seems to have been a turning-point in his life. On December 9, 1833, his tutor wrote about him to Mr Northcote, speaking of "the inequality of his performances and the utter want of constant purpose in his character." Mr Coleridge had even resolved to recommend that Stafford should be taken away. He had "a disposition too inclined to sacrifice itself to the solicitations of others." "Having so resolved, I communicated my resolve to Stafford, urging him at the same time by every argument in my power to relieve me from the necessity of doing my duty in so painful a way. I rejoice to tell you that my exertions have not been in vain. He is an altered creature, and now I really think so much to be depended on for constancy and energy, as he was before the unresisting victim of any one who would practise on his good and too easy nature." The boy has proposed to try for the Newcastle Scholarship, and "being now fully aware of his past irresolutions and idleness, he will for the future consider it no less a point of honour than a duty and pleasure to seek literary distinction by steady and well-directed industry." At this date he composed an essay on "Tails," of somewhat Darwinian tendencies. At home his sister, Mrs Lushington, remembers how fond he was of reading, and of concealing himself from domestic distraction and the calls of society in the boughs of a favourite tree. The rest of the family, one of whom recalls these memories, were Cecilia, afterwards Mrs Bishop; Henrietta, the lady just mentioned; and Mowbray, who took holy orders.

In November 1834, Stafford Northcote writes to his grandfather that he is thinking of going up for the Balliol Scholarship, which then was, and perhaps is now, the first

College honour in the eyes of ambitious schoolboys. Some Greek iambs of his in 1835 show no very great skill in the art, and are like "lady's Greek, without the accents." In June 1835, he first appeared "in knee-breeches and silk stockings," among the declaimers on Speech-day. He mentions, too, that he "takes long walks with Hobhouse," now Lord Hobhouse, and with his friend and future brother-in-law, Farrer. In March 1836, he describes his feats at Oxford. He did what every Oxford man remembers doing; he dined, and wined, and breakfasted with old schoolfellows; and said *do fidem* to the College statutes, without very clearly understanding their substance. He signed, without misgiving, the Thirty-nine Articles, now obsolete for this purpose; was formally matriculated, paid fees, and lunched. He had already tried, unsuccessfully, for the Balliol Scholarship; and his grandfather, Mr Cockburn, at this time writes about him, to Mr Northcote, as "our future statesman!" In April 1835, Mr Coleridge mentions not only Northcote's improvement in scholarship, but "his increased openness of manner, and the general manly uprightness of his mind and actions."

This was the character Northcote brought with him to Oxford, and into life. Before entering on residence at Balliol, he read for some time at Shirley, with the Rev. Mr Shirley. But it may be as well, here, to review his course at Eton. He was, it has been said, extremely fortunate in his tutor, Mr Coleridge, and not less happy in his friends. Of school friends his earlier *cons*, or *coms*, do not remain the most prominent. We hear more of the Hobhouses, and of Thomas Farrer, whose sister he married not long after leaving Oxford. As has been said already, he never was much of a cricketer; but he began to scull in 1832, and it was soon noticed that he sculled well. (Here I am indebted to "The Eton Days of Sir Stafford Northcote," an article in 'Temple Bar,' 1884.) He was asked to cox one of the long boats, but declined, which need not be regretted, as the temptations to intellectual arrogance and social levity that beset a cox are generally recognised and deplored.

Hence, indeed, the adjective "coxy." In 1834 he entered "The Boats" (Third Upper, now "Prince of Wales"). In 1835 he rowed in the Eton eight. A Balliol scholar who had pulled bow in the Eton eight has never been a common addition to the College. From the article in 'Temple Bar,' I venture to extract this account of Northcote as an oarsman, for there is a great deal of character in rowing. He was not addicted to the poetic pleasure of solitary sculling.

Shortness of sight prevented him from taking to cricket, . . . when wet-bobbing was the pastime of the faster set. In the summer half of 1832, Northcote began to scull pretty regularly on the river, and was soon noticed for the neatness of his oarsmanship. As he was small and of light build, an offer was made him to steer one of the long boats, which he declined; but it was predicted of him very early that he would become one of the best oars in the school, and this came to pass. In 1834 he entered the Boats, and was placed at once in the "Third Upper," now called "Prince of Wales," but then "Adelaide" after the Queen Consort; in 1835 he rowed in the school eight, and going to Oxford, he pulled for a Balliol boat. It has been stated that Northcote was put into the "Adelaide" when he entered the Boats in 1834. This was no small honour, for a boy almost always began by pulling in one of the Lower boats. The non-Etonian reader may be reminded that the Lower boats were not reserved for Lower boys. The "Boats" was the term applied to a rowing club formed by the crews of one 10-oar and seven 8-oars—all of whom were required to be Upper boys. In 1835, Northcote was captain of the "Adelaide" and "bow" of the eight. There was no race against Westminster that year, and Northcote only pulled in one important school race (Upper Sixes), which he lost. One of his old companions in the eight writes of him:—

"Northcote pulled in the perfection of Eton style—with grace and neatness. He sat up well, always got a good grip of the water, with a strong, clean cut, and feathered neither too high nor too low. The best of him was his sweet temper. He worked as much as the heaviest man in the boat, but never grumbled or looked tired, or took anything amiss. I remember once we were run into by a large 'tub' full of Cockneys near Lower Hope. I am afraid we all used some rather ornate language except N., who, without a word, set himself to stop up a hole in the

.

'bows' by stuffing part of his coat into it. When we got back to Rafts it turned out that N. was the only one of the crew who had got hurt, for the bow of the Cockney boat had bumped his shoulder rather badly. He was just as philosophical in the debates at 'Pop,' taking chaff and contradiction very coolly, but waiting for you round a corner, as it were, and confronting you with some unanswerable argument when you had ceased to expect it. His placidity made you think he had no strong opinions, but he never cared to join in the first fray of a debate, when everybody was anxious to speak. . . . He used to listen to what others said, and was clever at reviving a debate which flagged. He was not reckoned one of our best speakers, for he only stood up when he had something to say—adding nothing by way of rhetorical ornament."

From April to October 1, 1836, Northcote read with the Rev. Mr Shirley at Shirley Vicarage, Derby. From a letter written by him in 1848 (February 27) to Mrs Shirley may be gathered the principal facts about his residence with his tutor.¹ Northcote was then the only pupil, and found Mr Shirley interested, like himself, in the classics, and heraldry, rather an unusual theme. Mr Shirley "generally took occasion to give a religious turn to our conversations on every subject," though heraldry scarcely lends itself directly to religion. Northcote, to please his tutor, at first taught in his Sunday-school. He had a very high opinion of the unobtrusive piety of his preceptor, which, indeed, coincided with his own frame of mind through life. Seldom has a modern man of so much intellect been so utterly unvexed by speculative doubts and anxieties. This freedom was part of his greatest natural gift, the gift of Happiness. He was soon, however, to be engaged, perhaps was already engaged, in one of those religious crises which early manhood, if at all intelligent, seldom escapes. In Northcote's case, as will be seen, neither doubt, nor a tendency to the Catholic doctrine, was the cause of much hard thinking and considerable anxiety. Rather he was possessed by a desire to believe more and to hope more

¹ Letters and Memoir of Bishop Shirley, p. 217.

than is consistent with a conventional orthodoxy within the Church of England. In the quiet of Shirley he felt "a peculiar happiness and serenity," which certainly does not seem consistent with a theory that he was already much concerned with the mystic speculations and the Irvingite dreams which slightly disturbed him when at Oxford.

On turning to his correspondence with his family at this period, it seems that he "felt rather out of his element" when teaching in Sunday-school, though he was very much in his element, later, with the boys at his own Reformatory near Pynes, on Sunday afternoons. He found Shirley "perfectly odious from those brutes of cats, which are always prowling round, and I do not like to kick them." Sir Walter Scott detected in himself the first sign of age when he came to like a cat. Let it be hoped that as Northcote grew into years so his feelings improved towards a charming animal, the friend of literature and of men of letters.

In writing to his sisters, he takes a somewhat humorous view of the tract-distributing which was part of his duty at Shirley. Indeed, his letters to his sisters are always affectionately pleasant and diverting, occasionally containing references to a language which they had invented at home. But this tongue, like the speech which the boy in the Scotch legend brought out of fairy-land, is a dead language now, and has left no literature. He conceived, at Shirley, the ambition to try for the Newdigate, the Oxford prize poem. The subject was "The Gipsies," and, as everybody knows, Arthur Stanley was the winner. But very good men have failed to get the Newdigate. And now a happy boyhood ends, or melts into a manhood also happy, "as mortals reckon happiness."

CHAPTER II.

OXFORD.

NORTHCOTE went into residence at Balliol in the beginning of the Michaelmas term, 1836. The Balliol of that day was very unlike the too pointed edifice of later years. The quadrangle which faces the Broad was not very ancient, but the black and mouldering stone gave an air of respectable antiquity. The inner quadrangle was still "the Grove," the new hall was not built, nor had the old chapel been destroyed, the Jacobean oak panelling been placed in the common room, and the "streaked bacon" chapel of the present day erected. It was quite a small though a distinguished College when Northcote was a freshman. The Master was "the old Master," Dr Jenkyns, who, properly speaking, made the Balliol of modern times. Of his eccentricities many an anecdote was current, which "won its way to the mythical," as Thucydides has it, and became attached to later Masters as they succeeded each other. The scholarships at Balliol were already renowned prizes, and were attracting a set of young men who made their mark in life. The poem by Principal Shairp on "Balliol Scholars" is somewhat later, but gives a good idea of the Scholars' table, where Northcote now sat, a table of unluxurious fare, as was all the fare in these ancient halls, if the dinners were like those of Balliol in a later generation. But it is on record that the new scholar was a powerful and uncritical trencherman. Probably he did not find fault even with the noted Balliol commons of "haunch of mutton."

His rooms were on the Scholars' staircase, and deplorable rooms the first set that he occupied were. The window commanded a portion of the Master's premises, or rather it would have commanded it, but the glass was frosted, and the casement only opened for an inch or two. The freshman had not been in very robust health, and he was reading for the Balliol Scholarship. However, he

does not complain much of the want of light and air, indeed there never was a person less addicted to grumbling. In a letter to Mr Shirley (October 15) he says that Mr Ward was his tutor,—Ward notable later as a deserter to the Roman communion, and famous theological disputer. A good many of Northcote's Eton friends were up, and, as there were "two very decided sets" in the College, he flattered himself that he was in the better set of the twain.

Amusements and studies at this period interested him much less than religion, though neither books nor the river were neglected. His mother, Mrs Northcote, was a lady of very decided Evangelical opinions. Her letters breathe a spirit of devotion, testify to an absorption, it may be said, in the things of religion, in the vision of another life, that is not, that never can have been, common. Her eldest son, with an affectionate and gentle character, was likely to see religion with his mother's eyes. We have heard how he read chapters "in whispers" with Carew, when he was a small boy at Brighton. There is a kind of tradition that the sight of one of his eyes was injured by reading at the same closely printed Bible with his mother. In Mr Shirley he had found a tutor who introduced religion on every occasion. In his letter to Mr Shirley we find him deploring, on his own part, a want of what our great-grandfathers called *enthusiasm*. His beliefs are thoroughly correct, but the state of his religious emotions does not satisfy him. "I almost fear that my heart has never been really touched, but that I have been rather hurried along by the feelings of the moment, than by any serious change of heart, and that the world will yet be too powerful for me." Northcote then speaks of Goulburn, whom he had known at Eton, and who became head-master of Rugby for a season. Goulburn and Waldegrave were anxious that Northcote should join them in reading the Bible steadily, with other religious exercises, on Sunday evenings; but it does not appear that their invitation was accepted.

At the end of November 1836, Northcote was elected to

one of the Balliol Scholarships. It is said that he gave an extraordinary proof of memory at this examination. Several years later, at a scholarship examination, a passage from the old 'Spectator' was read aloud, and the competitors were told to write down as much of it as they could from memory. Mr Woolcombe, so well remembered by old Balliol men for his theological lectures, or "catechetics," was the examiner. Seeing that some of the aspirants looked blank, he informed them that Mr Northcote, when trying for the scholarship, had written all the passage out correctly, after but one hearing. He was second to Arthur Clough, and very curious it is to think how like those boys then were in many ways, and what different courses they had to run. Clough was shy, and they were never very intimate. A dozen years later Northcote mentions some vagaries of Clough's in Paris during the Revolution, and the "intoxication" which he then shared, oddly enough, with the French poet, Charles Baudelaire. But there are no earlier references to Clough in Northcote's correspondence. In several letters he expresses a dislike of Rugby, which he afterwards modified, and perhaps overcame. He appears to have thought that Dr Arnold's liberal tendencies were perilous in religion. Clough was a Rugby boy, but in his school-days, and when he came up first to Balliol, his letters are at least as devout as those of Northcote.

Both young men entered Oxford in one of its recurrent theological crises. As Mr Palgrave says, in Clough's 'Biography': "The University was stirred to its depths by the great Tractarian movement. Dr Newman was in the fulness of his popularity, preaching at St Mary's; and in pamphlets, reviews, and verses continually pouring forth eloquent appeals to every kind of motive that could influence men's minds. Mr Ward was one of the foremost of the party, . . . and thus, at the very entrance into his new life, Clough was thrown into the very vortex of discussion." Mr Ward was Northcote's tutor, but the vortex of discussion did not drag *him* down. Clough harassed himself and wasted his powers and the flying terms on

questions which time, *pulveris exigui jactu*, has fairly well settled or stifled. Northcote read and rowed in the College eight, and lived chiefly with the Eton men. One cannot conceive him writing, like Clough, "I believe the Balliol set is truly wise." But he had his own theological difficulties of a very peculiar kind, not solved by the truly wise men of Balliol.

Seven or eight years before this date, the celebrated Mr Irving had come upon the stage of London as a popular preacher, and more or less as an unpopular prophet. A man of intense devotion and poetic temperament, Mr Edward Irving had been attracted in Scotland by certain psychological phenomena connected with religious excitement. This is not the place to discuss the young lady who "spoke with tongues" unintelligible to mankind. These, she declared, with some humour, were the vernacular of the Pellew Islands, a statement which it was not easy to disprove at a moment's notice. The adventurous maid was the beginner of that talking "with tongues" in Mr Irving's congregation, which became so notorious. The preacher himself, with his adherents, lived in a kind of new dispensation, in which miraculous gifts were being granted to the faithful, and which might herald some fresh revealing of the councils of Heaven, perhaps the Second Advent. Of Mr Irving himself, Sir Walter Scott has left a sketch which I cannot resist the temptation to quote:—

I met to-day the celebrated divine and *soi-disant* prophet, Irving. He is a fine-looking man (bating a diabolical squint), with talent on his brow and madness in his eye. His dress, and the arrangement of his hair, indicated that. I could hardly keep my eyes off him while we were at table. He put me in mind of the devil disguised as an angel of light, so ill did that horrible obliquity of vision harmonise with the dark tranquil features of his face, resembling that of our Saviour in Italian pictures, with the hair carefully arranged in the same manner. There was much real or affected simplicity in the manner in which he spoke. He rather *made play*, spoke much, and seemed to be good-humoured. But he spoke with that kind of unction

which is nearly allied to *cajolerie*. He boasted much of the tens of thousands that attended his ministry at the town of Annan, his native place, till he wellnigh provoked me to say he was a distinguished exception to the rule that a prophet was not esteemed in his own country. But time and place were not fitting.¹

Mr Irving died on December 6, 1834. But the doctrines of his followers, to which he lent eloquent expression, survived him, and still survive. The Newman Street congregation was the centre of believers in the probability that some strange thing was beginning within the Church. Mrs Northcote inclined very warmly to these ideas: her letters to her son are full of reference to the near and happy future—to the trials of the Church within the Church, as it were—to deacons, angels, and apostles.

Mrs Northcote's tendency towards the opinions of the Church in Newman Street was not shared by her husband. Stafford Northcote was thus in a difficult and somewhat distressing position, in which he conducted himself with much tact and propriety.

On July 18, 1837, he writes thus to his father, on the matter of their theological differences:—

I will fairly state to you my opinions on the main subject of your letter, which are—that for the last few months I have felt a conviction of the truth of all that I have heard, so far as that had given me opportunities of knowing the doctrines held by Mr Bridgeman, and others of the same persuasion; but, of course, my knowledge is to a great extent limited, nor could I in any way, were it my business, undertake to answer the objections which might be urged against it. I should be sorry to venture to put *my* opinion against those of others, and especially of such as are better qualified by knowledge or experience to form a judgment than *I* can be; but I do not, on the other hand, wish to allow myself to be swayed by *men*, when I can find a more unerring guide in the Word of God, which I certainly believe to be in accordance with all that I have heard of the doctrines in question. I do not conceive these to be of such a character as in any way to call upon me to *desert*, or to think less highly than I do, of the form of worship adopted by the Church of

¹ Lockhart, ix. 329.

England, neither do I believe that any *separation* from that Church is advised or recognised by such men as I allude to ; but I am not prepared to speak fully on the subject. Be assured at all events, my dear father, that I should never think of taking any steps in the matter without your full concurrence and approbation, further than retaining *the belief* which I now hold.

And now, having said my say, it remains only that I thank you for the very kind spirit of your letter, and I am sure that we shall not long be left at variance, but be indeed guided into the right path, if we seek it.

In February he wrote to his father on the subject, a subject all the more delicate, as Mrs Northcote's health had given way, and the illness, from which she never recovered, had declared itself. It is indeed curious to note how often the Oxford years of undergraduates are harassed by anxieties about religion, and by domestic sorrows.

BALLIOL, Feb. 24, 1838.

MY DEAREST FATHER,—I am indeed sorry to hear of mamma's illness ; but I do trust, and am sure that it is for good and not for evil, and that she is now recovering from the effects of it. Pray give my best love to her, and assure her that I have not failed to join my prayers to yours in her behalf. Pray write *soon* to let me know how she is, as one is always most anxious at a distance.

To come to the second part of your letter. I am glad to have an opportunity of expressing some of my views, which you certainly ought to know, though I could not, of course, put them forward unasked. Remember, however, that I have had but little and indirect communication with the Newman Street Church or others of the same persuasion, and cannot therefore be expected to give anything like a statement of their views on the subject. You ask me first what I disapprove of in our National Church as a body. If by that you mean our Church as viewed in her Articles, I agree with you that she is the purest in existence, and there is not one of those Articles (except that of the headship of the king) which a member of the Church in which I believe should object to sign. Not that the Church of England has been hitherto wrong in holding that Article ; but if Christ (according to their belief) has more immediately manifested Himself in the Church of late, He is, of course—and as

you would allow if you believed this—superior to any earthly head.

Now I do not consider that this work *necessarily* implies that God found any particular faults in the Church of England, but rather that He is taking a step *in* that Church by clearing up the minds of men with respect to (1) the *Sacraments*, and (2) the *Ordinances* of the Church. Just in the same way He took a step in the Church at the time of the Reformation; and though the Church of Rome then rejected His work, and was therefore cast off, yet the step was not a step *out* but *in* the Church. I do not know whether this is clear. "The Church," of course, means the *whole* body of believers. Now this body ought to be at unity with itself (Eph. iv. 3, 6), and there ought to be a joining together of all the parts in their respective places, so that the whole building may be fitly framed together, &c. (Eph. ii. 21). For this purpose God set divers ordinances in His Church. These are enumerated in His Church (Eph. iv. 11) and elsewhere. They are—1st, apostles, 2d, prophets, 3d, evangelists, 4th, pastors. And these were given not for a short time, but "till we all come in the unity of the faith unto a *perfect man*" (Eph. iv. 13). Now, are we that yet? Clearly not. Therefore these ordinances surely ought to continue. And they do exist in the Church of England, though in confusion. The cathedral establishment is a perfect Church. But more offices are crowded upon one than it can bear; thus we have no distinction between *pastors* and *evangelists*, though they have different duties to perform. Hence the difficulty of *preaching*, which is addressed partly to *converted*, partly to *unconverted*, and thus the *meat* is not properly given to the one nor the *milk* to the other (1 Cor. iii. 2, and Heb. vi. 1, 2). This is, then, one of the things which it pleases God to set in order.

With regard to the Sacraments, the Church of England expressly recognises in her 25th Article that they are more than signs—that they are real life-giving ordinances. But this has fallen into oblivion, and this is another point which God is clearing out—rather bringing us back to our own profession than giving a *new* view on the subject. These two objects are sufficient, I think, to account for the Lord's work if it be indeed His; but there also appear to be other reasons why a more full revelation should be granted. In the first place, there is the want of *unity* in the Church of England. St Paul entreats the Corinthians to speak the same thing, to be perfectly joined, &c. (1 Cor. i. 10). Do we find this in the Church of England? Is it not much more rare to find two who agree than two who differ?

And can this be right? Here you will say: "How strange that you should speak against disunion, who are yourself making a schism in the Church!" It must appear so to you; but I do not think we can be looked upon as schismatics for retaining the view of the Church of England, who is herself guilty of the schism by departing from her own Articles. Look at the bitterness of spirit between the High Church (who have the form without the spirit) and the Evangelical party, who throw off the form and despise government (2 Pet. ii. 10). Of course I speak of them as a body and not as *individuals*. Another reason which God may have for preparing more especially at this time a body for Himself may be a near, or comparatively near, approach of His coming in glory, when a *bride* must be ready to meet Him (Rev. xix., xxi.) But where is that bride to be found? For it evidently does not mean the company of those who are to be saved, many of whom will remain on earth while Christ and the bride remain in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17); and whereas "the bride" will escape from the tribulation which will follow upon the loosing of Satan (Rev. xx. 7), there will still be "saints" on the earth at that period (verse 9) who shall be persecuted but saved. May not these be they who shall be saved, yet so as by fire? (1 Cor. iii. 11-15.) You will say this is imagination and no argument, and I will not bring it forward as one. But I think I have shown some reasons why the Church of England should be amended and set to rights. I have not room to enter upon your next question—What is my warrant for my present belief?—but I hope to do so soon. Meantime, my dearest father, let us pray for each other that God may enlighten us to see the truth and embrace it with a willing mind, not blown about by every wind of doctrine. If you *study* the Epistle to the Ephesians, you will see most of what I have mentioned, or would do had I room. At present, adieu! Give my best love to mamma and all at Pynes, and hopes for the good health and prosperity of all—and fit weather for Mowbray's voyage to the North Pole. This letter leaves little room for news, which is lucky, as I had none to communicate. Love to G. P. and M., and ever believe me your affectionate son,
STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

A later letter (Balliol, March 11, 1838) contains a summary of the same opinions. The arguments are urged with a respectful firmness and candour, which speaks very happily of the relations between father and son. On the whole, Stafford Northcote's position is, that miraculous

gifts are not *a priori* impossible, that prophecy leads us to expect them, and that the evidence for their existence deserves careful consideration. But, for his own part, he had no desire to separate himself from that branch of the Church in which he was born. Indeed, as appears from later letters to other correspondents, he held that the Church is one body—in Russia, in Rome, in England—and that a man must cleave to the Church as he finds it among his own people. *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna*, is his motto; and he even proclaims that were the Church in a man's own land corrupt, and were another division of it pure, he should abide by the religion into which he was born. With this sturdy belief he combined, at least in youth, the opinion that in Catholic countries a Protestant Englishman should attend Catholic services.¹

To be done with the topic of Stafford Northcote's religious beliefs, it may be enough to say that he continued always a devout son of the Church of England, constant in her communion, and a reverent observer of her ceremonies and services. Members of the Newman Street congregation tried at various times to induce him to declare himself their partisan. Some natural doubts as to his beliefs, and their possible consequences in practice, were entertained, at the time of his betrothal, by the mother of his bride. At the South Devon election of 1855 the "No Puseyite!" cry was howled against him with considerable success. He really was of no party in the Church; but preferred, in the matter of services and ceremonies, a minute attention to whatever was of use and custom. It cannot be said that, as time went on, he

¹ This was an opinion which he altered in later years. His residence in France (1857) gave him a considerable interest in the English Church in Paris, an interest which declares itself in his correspondence. In 1861, he was busy with the affairs and organisation of the Rev. Archer Gurney's Parisian chapel, when a Protestant association "discomposed" him by a circular. Mr Archer Gurney had made views about the Eucharist and about prayers for the dead prominent in what may be called his programme. Now, if the Church was to have Sir Stafford's support, it must be "on the broadest Anglican basis," not the organ of any Church party whatever. The result was that he withdrew his name, and did not, as he had intended, receive subscriptions for the chapel.

used the language of Evangelical zeal as much as he had done in boyhood.¹ His disposition was not speculative. Even in politics he seldom takes wide views, or glances at events, as it were, from historical and philosophic heights. His intellectual interests were chiefly in pure letters: poetry and our old drama. His natural loyalty kept him steadfast in the worship and in the beliefs of the Church of his ancestors.

The records of undergraduate life are not usually exciting. Northcote wrote a programme of lectures for Mr Vaux, whom he appointed to the Chair of Things in General at Balliol, an important professorship. The programme of his course of lectures is extant. They include a discussion of Human Nature, with an account of Whiggism from the earliest times, and a New Theory of the Illumination of the Pyramids. Apparently the learned professor's hypothesis was that the Egyptians were acquainted with the use of gas, but later excavations do not confirm this opinion. A "Scheme for blowing up London University" was of a more practical character. In the anatomical course "the skull of a Whig will be displayed, and shown to be deficient in good qualities." The fourth lecture dealt with nautical affairs, starting from Noah's Ark, and closing with the Balliol Boat and the St John's Boat. In mathematics the professor held out hopes of a "still greater genius than Newton," whose modest home, perhaps, was in "2 Fisher's Buildings, two pair stairs." In politics the curriculum closed with a scheme for a "Grand Massacre of Radicals," in which it is to be feared that Clough might have perished. On the whole, the lectures, as sketched for Mr Vaux, were by no means pessimistic.

In 1839 Northcote was a good deal occupied with coaching his brother Mowbray, and starting him at Eton. He recognised that, as far as Eton was concerned, bullying

¹ One of the rare references to such topics in his correspondence is a passage in an Eton letter of 1833. Some one gave him "a curious account of some skeletons of animals supposed to have existed before the Creation, which I cannot quite take in."

existed in an inverse ratio to fagging, which he regarded as a beneficent institution. He had very little of it at school, but there is reason to suppose that his younger brother did not take exactly the same view. On April 15, 1839, we again hear of his friend Farrer, with whom he was enjoying the distractions of London, not much in the style of Gibbon's "Manly Oxonian," but with more discretion. "We went to the panorama of Rome in Leicester Square." He told "some twenty fairy tales" to children, and he rowed on the river, and saw the boat-race, in which Oxford was well beaten, but not without an excuse. When did a beaten eight lack a reason for losing? "One of our men had unfortunately run a splinter into his hand, which was very much swelled. This accounts for our being beaten so hollow, as he was unable to do any good after the first mile. However, it was a fair beating anyhow," he adds, impartially. In place of dining with the crews, he went home, and so to bed at ten, and that is a blameless way of spending the boat-race night. No Cave of Harmony allured him. But the author of this "history," as he calls it (a letter to Mrs Northcote), doubts whether he will be able to read next term, which was the summer term, and the season when the whistle of the cox is heard in the land.

However, in May he is found working hard, "reading with Elder," who is yet remembered by his contemporaries as a very strenuous "coach." "Chapel is over by eight," he writes to Mrs Northcote, "when I have breakfast, and then read till four, when we have dinner, then generally a party till six, when we go down the river till near nine, when we come up to tea or supper, and go to bed at half-past ten." A cricketering man could not have got so much work out of a summer day. He never says much about his boating life, and the historian is obliged to search the records of the river. "I am desirous to wind up my boating life," he says in a letter to Miss Cecilia Northcote (May 20, 1839), "as I do not suppose I shall ever have much pulling after I have taken my degree." He intends to pull in an Oxford old Etonian crew at Henley against

the school, "and this will probably be my last race," over which he expends no sentiment. "The races began on Thursday, but on account of some false starts the first night was not counted; but last night we started second, and, having bumped the Exeter boat, came up at the head of the river, which is a matter of great rejoicing, though we do not expect to keep our place more than one night, as Ch. Ch. and Merton are both likely to bump us in course of time."

Not very many reading men have been able to row in their last summer term and secure their First, while water men have a very strong opinion that the muscles of the studious are absorbed into their brains. The writer cannot, indeed, remember an example of such divided and successful energies as at this time Stafford Northcote was displaying, apparently without any strain. Those who remember him at College say that his facility was extraordinary. Without being brilliant or a wit, he did all things well, and all things with ease. The number of hours during which he read, without a break, astonishes one who has known many hard readers. But it is to be noticed that he kept his afternoons for himself, and never studied after dinner. Even so, for a man to be in training, and yet to read from eight to four, shows unusual strength of constitution, mental and bodily. Training, be it remembered, was harder, harsher, and much more disagreeable in those days than it is now, as any one may read in 'Tom Brown at Oxford.' The victims were tortured by thirst, even the ration of water was very short, and they were compelled to be great eaters of beef and marmalade. Sir T. H. Farrer adds, from memory of these days, "We rebelled against the training, and he especially. His capacity for porter, in the 'Man of Ross,' a great silver College cup, was a thing to wonder at, especially after a race." The "Man of Ross" is a beaker like the "Bear of Bradwardine" or the Cup of Heracles.

In July, Northcote went to Lyme Regis with a reading party under Mr Elder. "I can read as much as I like," he says in a letter to Miss Henrietta Northcote, "which is not above seven or eight hours a-day. I really cannot

tie myself down for ten hours, as Holland does, so if I can't get my First without so much reading, I shall just lump it." He disliked the regularity of dinners on eternal mutton-chops, and hated measured "constitutionals." The reading party, like most large reading parties, is said to have included a good many idle men, and they all diverted themselves, and took that part of Horace's advice to the young, which bids them not spurn dances. In October, after leaving Lyme, he writes to Mr Shirley that he is hopeful about his classical degree, but hardly looks for more than a Third in mathematics. He fears that his mother "will be too ill to move to Devonshire this year. We have had a good deal of anxiety about her; but I trust it may be the Lord's will to restore her to us, though at present appearances are very bad, and the doctors have not any very sanguine hopes. . . . I am learning daily that one ought to live for to-day, and not for any schemes, for they never come to pass." This is pretty nearly Sydney Smith's philosophy. "Take short views," and, indeed, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. To his mother he writes, three weeks before his examination, with natural cheerfulness. "I am in wonderful preservation, with the exception of a slight attack of atrophy, which is swelling my dinner-bills to a frightful amount. . . . Instead of being ill, and in a funk, as most of my neighbours are, I find myself much the same as ever, and go down the river, or play fives every day, as if nothing were the matter." He "put down a list of fifteen books, being probably acquainted with none of them." Nothing alters more, or more frequently, than the examination system at Oxford. In Northcote's time a man who aspired to classical honours was expected to know Aldrich (in Logic, Mill was only coming in), Butler's 'Analogy,' Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle (chiefly the Ethics), Tacitus, a good deal of Cicero, and other classic authors, some of whom are now studied in Moderations. We may gather what men *did* read from what Hope, in 'The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich,' proposed to leave unread:—

"Fare ye well, meantime, forgotten, unnamed, undreamt of,
History, Science, and Poets! lo, deep in dustiest cupboard,

Thookydid, Oloros' son, Halimoosian, here lieth buried !
 Slumber in Liddell-and-Scott, O musical chaff of old Athens,
 Dishes, and fishes, bird, beast, and sesquipedalian blackguard !
 Sleep, weary ghosts, be at peace and abide in your lexicon-limbo !
 Sleep, as in lava for ages your Herculean kindred,
 Sleep, and for aught that I care, 'the sleep that knows no waking,'
 Æschylus, Sophocles, Homer, Herodotus, Pindar, and Plato."¹

Writing to Miss Cecilia Northcote (November 7, 1839), he says, "There goes the dinner-bell, to whose inspiring sound I am indebted for the prolific vein of genius that pervades this composition ! I think I should do wonders in the Schools if they would but put a beef-steak under the table. . . . My complaint is Soul : it expands, it dilates, it urges me to finish my letter and begin my dinner."

Such was the jolly old nonsense of undergraduate days : many of us have written it, few of us forget, all of us regret these years, after which the sparkle is out of the champagne, and the road for most of us—not for Northcote—runs "long and dusty, and straight to the grave."²

Few reading men have gone more gallantly into that ordeal—the Schools. Some lose all nerve and heart, to some courage is lent by despair, and their demeanour is jaunty. "Where facts are weak, their native cheek brings them serenely through." But Northcote does not appear to have been half so nervous as most men are at a boat-race, when the first gun has been fired, and the warning comes from the bank, "four minutes gone." However, he wrote to his father (November 13) that, till the first day of the Schools, he "never knew what it was to be over-worked. But when I came out of the Schools, I could hardly walk, I was so giddy." By the third day, he "was as fresh as if nothing had happened," and sent his sister Cecilia the following *recipe* for making "Tom trot," which, like figs, as described by Thackeray, is "the never-failing soother of youth,"—"The principal ingredients are brown sugar and lemon and butter. The great point is to keep stirring it *all the time it is boiling*." His light literature at this time was the 'Arabian Nights.'

¹ The Bothie, by A. H. Clough.

² Robert Louis Stevenson.

By the 15th he was able to report to Mrs Northcote that the examination was over, that he had been rather floored in Logic and the "critical paper," but in all the rest had done as well as he expected. "If good wishes could get me a class, I should have a Double-First ten times over," he adds. The examiners, however, care for none of these things, and "not even Henrietta and Cecilia in tears—touching spectacle—would move them to alter my fate." Some ill-advised person had tried to frighten Mrs Northcote, by hinting that Stafford's leanings towards the Newman Street Church would prejudice the examiners against him! The lady had too much sense to be alarmed on this score; but observed, with truth, that a rumour of his religious ideas would do him no good in competing for a certain fellowship. He put on his gown on November 21 (signing himself B.A. in a letter to his father). On November 28, he was in that "beautiful agony" many of us know, waiting till Farrer and Coleridge (the present Lord Chief-Justice) should bring the news of his class. Apparently it is always a man's nearest friend who does him this kindness. Old things revive at the thought, and dear faces of youth; old years return, and he who writes remembers. Thus it is that the University makes all her children akin by their kindred memories. "At last," says Northcote, "I heard an immense rush on the stairs, and about twenty men burst in at once, too much out of breath to speak. However the fact was evident; and I underwent a host of congratulations, which have, in fact, hardly ceased for the last twenty-four hours." He could rejoice with others as well as be rejoiced with, and the Master of Balliol remembers the heartiness with which Northcote greeted him when he got his fellowship. "As great success," he wrote about his own case, "is usually accompanied by symptoms of consumption, I hasten to inform you that none such have yet appeared." His mathematical class was a Third, but the First and Third, taken together, were the second-best double honours of the year.

Here his College career ends; he never went in for

a College fellowship. In reading his letters, one is much struck by the health and tranquillity, bodily and mental, of years that are usually full of *sturm und drang*. His high spirits, his humour and good-humour, his physical strength, and even his interest in a form of religion not fashionable nor subject of controversy at Oxford, carried him happily through a time that is often trying. Perhaps his inclination to the truth as conceived by Mr Irving was really serviceable. It kept Northcote from breaking his mind against the craggy disputes which engaged Clough and so many others. There was at no time much risk of his drifting with the other current which ran towards doubt and "agnosticism." He did his work, he played his play, reading hard, rowing hard,—successful in the Schools and on the river,—happy in his affection for his home, and in winning the hearts of many friends.

Though the departure from Oxford makes a break in a man's existence, and is the beginning of a new career, it seems better to continue this chapter till the moment of Northcote's entry on official life. In March 1840, we find him writing to Mr Shirley from the Middle Temple, where he was reading with a special pleader. He had not yet taken possession of his rooms in 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields. In law he expresses a somewhat lukewarm interest, and announces that he is competing, against Arthur Stanley, for the English essay, "Do States, like Individuals, inevitably tend after a period of Maturity to Decay?"¹ He did not gain the prize, and he had now quite made up his mind not to stand for a fellowship anywhere.

On Easter-day 1840, his mother died, after a long and anxious illness. The event could not but increase the earnestness of his religious feelings.

An important letter on the old Irvingite troubles is dated May 15, 1840:—

MY DEAR FATHER,—I very often find it easier to express my thoughts correctly in writing than in speaking; and on that account, as I am very anxious that you should not mistake my

¹ Published in 'Lectures and Essays.'

views upon the subject of which I was speaking to you last week, I hope you will allow me just to state to you what I then meant to say. You are already aware that I have been for some time induced to believe that the Lord is now speaking in His Church by the mouths of men, as was the case in former times; but you are also aware that it must be impossible for any one to satisfy himself of the truth or falsehood of the claim to such inspiration, without inquiring of those persons by whom the claim is advanced, and seeking whether they have any grounds to support it. Now this I have hitherto had no opportunity of doing; for all my information has been received casually from persons who have for the most part not been actual members, or at least authorities, in the church which advances this claim. Although, therefore, I confess that I am much inclined to believe its truth, yet I do not profess to have sufficiently investigated the subject to express a decided opinion. I know that your opinion is, that it is better for me to let the subject alone altogether, and remain in my present state, neither wholly affirming nor altogether denying the truth of the supposed work. I quite agree with you that it is not right for any one to thrust himself into a needless danger of going wrong by undertaking to argue with those whom he believes to be in error, without very strong grounds for so doing; but when so great a claim is set up, and when a person is induced to think that it is well grounded, surely it cannot be that person's duty to sit still and not to inquire into the whole matter. For in the present case they who see any grounds for believing the Lord to be now speaking in His Church, and who nevertheless sit still and do nothing, are in fact proclaiming that they do not care whether it is the Lord's voice indeed or not. But you say it is very dangerous for an individual to trust to his own private judgment—let each guide his course by the rules and decisions of the Church. This I admit; but of *what Church* am I to take the decision? For though on this one point the great body of the Church of England would give the same answer—yet on numerous others their answers would be very different—and it would therefore be *absolutely necessary* that I should at length so far rely upon my own private judgment, as to decide which of all those answers I should receive as the true one. And with regard to the weight which the opinions of particular individuals ought to have upon me, I do not deny that it would be presumptuous in me to compare my powers to theirs; yet I cannot therefore allow that I am not to inquire into the truth myself, and giving full weight to the fact that so many good and excellent men are opposed to it, I must yet consider that

their opinions are after all fallible, and that many of them on certain points *must be* wrong, because so diametrically opposed to each other.

And now that I have, I think, fully stated my reasons for wishing to inquire, I wish also to tell you what my principles of conduct are. If you shall still express a *wish* that I should inquire no further, I will in no case do so, further than such casual points as may arise in conversation with others, and which I may chance to hear of; but I will not either attend any of the services of the church or at all press you to consent to my doing so, because I am convinced that what is begun in the spirit of disobedience and insubordination *cannot* prosper. I will not promise to relinquish my belief, for that I cannot do without strong reasons, but I will not take any outward steps to strengthen it. If, however, you should not object to my inquiring to satisfy my own mind, I further promise that I will on no account take any step, such as leaving the Church of England or joining myself to that now being gathered, without your *free* consent, unless any unforeseen circumstances should occur, however persuaded I may become of the truth of the work. Such are the resolutions to which I have come; and now I would desire to leave the further decision of the matter entirely in your hands. And being quite conscious of the hypocrisy of *talking* of obedience and *acting* in the spirit of disobedience, I am prepared to follow your wishes without requiring your commands. You will perhaps think that I am going a little against this principle in again troubling you after your declared opinion of last week, but my reasons for doing so are twofold. In the first place, I was fearful, as I said before, that I had not sufficiently expressed my wishes and my opinions to you in conversation. And secondly, I think it right to inform you that I have had a conversation with Mr Douglas, not for the purpose of inquiring into the truth of the work, but to discover whether I might, in accordance with his principles, continue in the Church of England, supposing me to have inquired, and satisfied myself as to the evidence for the present work. His opinion was what I have already expressed, that I not only *might* remain in the Church of England, under present circumstances, supposing me even so thoroughly convinced; but that it would be my duty so to do. Do not apply this as an argument for leaving alone the question as one of small importance; for there is much difference between refusing to inquire, and remaining in the Church of England after inquiry.

And now, my dear father, it is time to conclude. If I have said anything wrong or out of place in this letter; or if my conduct has not been right, as I know in many instances it has

not been, I can but say that I am heartily sorry for it, and that nothing is farther from my thoughts than in any way to act against your authority or to counteract your wishes. That you are grieved at the belief which I am adopting I know, and most sorry am I that it should be so; but with my views it is impossible that I should resign it, until convinced of its futility, and I most humbly pray that you also may be brought to give the subject a fuller attention than you have yet done. I am sure that our merciful Father in heaven, who has given us so many proofs of His fatherly goodness, will not leave us for ever divided upon this important point, but will eventually make His truth as manifest to both of us as the noonday.—With every prayer that it may soon be so, and with all love and duty, I remain, your affectionate son,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

May 15, 1840.

In August, Northcote was engaged in a little discussion about certain felicities of the Latin language, in which the Marquis Wellesley was interested. The question was—Can *littus* be properly used for the bank of a lake or river? Lord Wellesley had employed the term with this meaning. Mr Wyatt maintained that *littus* was only the sea-shore. A glance at White's 'Latin Dictionary,' like "index-learning, makes no student pale," and corroborates Lord Wellesley. Northcote took his side, for the honour of Eton, and easily pointed out examples in Ovid, Catullus, and Virgil, where *littus* is equivalent to *ripa*. He also noted that Horace uses *ripa* for the sea-shore. Lord Wellesley remarks: "Mr Northcote's observations prove him to be a sound Latin scholar." "Please God," adds Lord Wellesley, piously, "I will send Ben Wyatt cackling home to his Michaelmas associates." Northcote, in a letter to Mr Shirley, avers himself "profoundly ignorant of German." The Oxford theological tumult of the time was exciting him but little. As Charles Perrault said of the jangle between Port Royal and the Jesuits, "que la question méritait peu le bruit qu'elle faisait;" so Northcote possessed his soul in peace about Tract 90. "I conclude," he says, in a note to Mr Shirley, "that the storm of paper warfare has set in by this time with full violence, as it was evident that it must do sooner or later. I have not yet read any of the

recent publications, but shall do so as soon as I have time. 'Newman and the 90,' is to be a parallel to Wilkes and the 45." In the same note he lays down his arms against Rugby. He has heard of Arnold's recommending Lord Stafford to be sent, not to his own school, but to Eton. "It is very like everything one hears of Dr Arnold's openness of conduct, which even I confess very fine."

The summer of 1841 was partly spent on Circuit, and enjoyably enough. The letters written then are unimportant, but one to Mr Shirley, of October 18, 1841, shows that the state of politics was beginning to depress a man not usually "a croaker."

Great changes have taken place since I saw you last, in which you will probably not rejoice, though for my own part I am in hopes that they are for the better on the whole, and that Sir Robert Peel and his friends will do as much towards the saving of the country as any human *prudence* can be expected to do. If there were a little more security for their acting on fixed Church *principles*, I should be more confident of the ultimate result, but I own myself a bit of a croaker at present. Everything is in so dreadfully disorganised a state, Church and State alike shaken, and men so generally inclined to look to human means of setting all to rights, that the prospect is discouraging enough, or rather would be so, did it not seem that the present condition of affairs was only a prelude to some great working of the Lord. What with Puseyism and Evangelicalism, Popery and Dissent, oligarchy and democracy, we appear to have almost reached a *dignus vindice nodus*. I am almost afraid to write to you upon these subjects, because I know what you, perhaps justly, think of me; but whenever I do turn my thoughts that way, the whole seems so dark a scene of discord and anarchy, present or fast approaching, that it is difficult to keep one's faith in the ultimate providence of God steady.

In the same letter he mentions his first speech for the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. at Exeter. "I did not electrify the audience very much."

In June 1842, we find Northcote contemplating a tour in Greece "before Herodotus is quite forgotten." Pausanias does not appear to have been a favourite of his, though an author more valuable to the tourist. Before he could

carry out his intention, came the offer of the secretaryship to Mr Gladstone. Mr Gladstone had written (June 28, 1842) to Mr Coleridge at Eton, asking him to name a secretary from among his old pupils. Mr Coleridge named Mr Northcote, with two others. Mr Gladstone's choice fell on him. Mr Gladstone pointed out that the work was hard and the pay scanty. Concerning which he writes to his father:—

58 LINN. INN FIELDS, June 21, 1842.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Although I would not venture to write to one of my fashionable sisters on such a piece of paper as this, I trust you will be less particular, and therefore make bold to address you on it. To begin at the end, I believe I may almost say I have accepted the offer of the secretaryship (*c'est à dire*, if I have it made to me I mean to accept it). The facts are these: Rawson, who was my tutor's pupil and late secretary to Gladstone, has been appointed to a place of £1500 per annum in Canada. He is a great favourite of Gladstone's, who, both through him and through Lord Lyttelton (G.'s brother-in-law), applied to my tutor to know whether he could recommend a successor, mentioning at the same time that he had thought of Ryle, but found he was in orders. My tutor immediately wrote to him mentioning both myself and T. H. F., and giving him, as he informed us, a sketch of our respective lives, characters, and circumstances (which, by the by, I would give something to see), and ending with a strong recommendation of either of us, but more particularly of myself, for whom (on account of my position and prospects, &c.) he thought the situation best fitted. He expects an answer to this letter very shortly, and has little doubt that it will be an acceptance of his proposal, though I do not understand it as *certain*, but rather that Gladstone may be looking out in other quarters as well, and *may* have already lit upon some one, though I think it highly improbable.

The duties of the situation are principally to open all letters addressed to Mr G., to make notes of their contents and submit them to him, and, after receiving his instructions, to write answers to them; but he requires a person who will be ready to go along with him in all things, and whom he may treat quite confidentially. The requisites, as my tutor expresses them, are chiefly "modesty, quickness, readiness to oblige, and a ready pen." How far I possess any or all of these of course my friends must judge, but I do not dislike the prospect. All this I gleaned from my tutor in less than a ten minutes' conversation, for as

usual he was fully occupied ; but I think the matter has had his fullest attention, and he is decidedly of opinion that I ought to take advantage of this opening, provided I am prepared to follow up the course to which it leads. T. H. Farrer is also of the same opinion, and I have a very great respect for his judgment, which is the most remarkable for so young a person that I ever met with. I cannot tell you what a comfort he has been to me in making up my mind to all this. Finally, I conceive from what you said this morning, you are also inclined to the scheme ; so that I have three good judgments to back my own, which (my own I mean) I of course distrust. I shall call on the Judge [Mr Justice Coleridge] to-morrow morning, and if, as I expect, he is of the same way of thinking, I shall consider the matter as settled, that is, as I before said, supposing I get the offer. From what I know of Gladstone's character there is no single statesman of the present day to whom I would more gladly attach myself ; and I should think, from the talents he has shown for business since he came into office, there is no one more likely to retain his position, unless any *revolution* takes place. I believe, without vanity, that I shall be equal to the duties I am likely to have put upon me ; and as far as it is possible to conjecture in such a matter, I believe I am likely, from the tone of my opinions, to suit him. At all events, I think it is worth trying. I might go on writing to you for ever, putting the matter in all the different lights in which T. H. and I have been looking at it, for I assure you it has had a most careful discussion, but I will not weary you with so doing. *If I can*, I will come out to Roehampton to-morrow evening or next day, but do not expect me ; perhaps I ought to be here until I hear from my tutor, as I may have to call on Gladstone.

I did not make any inquiries about the salary, neither do I consider it material, for I know it will not be anything like an independence ; and therefore I do not consider that it would make any difference whether it were £50 or £100 a-year. From some of the particulars of Gladstone's conduct to Rawson, I may conclude that he is a most zealous friend when he is pleased with his client, but all this I consider secondary. I hope you will not take this as a specimen of my letter-writing powers. I think if Gladstone were to see it I should be a gone coon ; but I have been scribbling whatever came first into my head, and must beg your pardon if it is nonsense. Please be *very* careful not to mention this to any one yet, and urge the same upon G. P. and M., as nothing is settled. Love to them and the girls. I saw Mowbray : he did not get into any scrape with Hawtreys.—Your affte. son,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE

On June 30, 1842, he writes to tell Mr Shirley that he has accepted the secretaryship to Mr Gladstone—

The man of all others among the statesmen of the present day to whom I should desire to attach myself. . . . My prospects will, of course, depend upon Mr Gladstone's own success, of which, unless there is a regular *boulevercement*, I have not the smallest doubt. . . . A seat in Parliament will probably be considered by-and-by desirable, and any good offices that he can do for me I have reason to believe that he will. The line which is thus opened is one which I have always secretly desired, though I could have been content with the Law. . . . With any other man than Gladstone, I might have hesitated longer. But he is one whom I respect beyond measure; he stands almost alone as the representative of principles with which I cordially agree; and as a man of business, and one who, humanly speaking, is sure to rise, he is pre-eminent.

CHAPTER III.

ENTRY ON POLITICAL LIFE.

WHEN Stafford Northcote began in 1842 to be more or less actively engaged in official life, the Whig Administration had gone out, and the Tories had recently come in under Sir Robert Peel. The Tories, and Peel with the rest, had no idea that free trade in corn was actually at the doors. Mr Gladstone was President of the Board of Trade, and the statesman on whom fell the duty of carrying into effect Peel's policy for abolishing or reducing the duty on more than half of the articles then actually taxed. Stafford Northcote, as Mr Gladstone's secretary, had no doubt plenty of work to do in this large change; but he was also occupied by private interests of great importance. On July 4, 1842, he writes a long letter from Whitehall to his father. He announces that he is "neither engaged nor in any way committed with any person whatsoever, nor have I at this present time any intention of engaging myself to any one." But the elder

Mr Northcote had been writing or speaking to him seriously on the subject of marriage, and he in turn found it desirable to utter his mind with respectful distinctness. "Come what will, my unaltered and unalterable resolution is never to marry for money. I *will not* and *dare not* profane the holy ordinance of matrimony by mixing up such a motive as that of increasing my income with the motives which, I trust, will guide me in my choice of a wife." He presently goes on to say, and his words on a difficult topic are well worth quoting:—

My own idea of the rights of a father in such a case is this—first, that *under any circumstances* he has a right to require that his son shall not marry a person who is otherwise than thoroughly respectable; and secondly, that, where the son derives his maintenance from him, he shall have a voice in the amount of fortune which he will require in the lady—*i.e.*, that where the father *makes a sacrifice* in order to enable his son to marry, he may require that he shall not marry on that alone. Such are my ideas of *the rights of the father*; but in my own case I am ready to go further, and to say that I individually consider *the duties of the son* to be such, that I have no hesitation in promising that under no circumstances, even though I may become independent of you in a pecuniary point of view, will I marry any one without your consent as long as you live. I say this, because I feel it is in my power (though it would be a *very* severe trial to me) to endure an unmarried life; but farther I *ought not* and *will not go*, and I wish it most distinctly to be understood (I say it with all respect and dutifulness) that I *will not* marry any other than the woman of my own free and unfettered choice, and that choice I also say will be made without the smallest regard to her pecuniary circumstances or any other than the fitness of the woman in herself to be my helpmate. I hope you will not be angry at this frank avowal, which I consider you have yourself called for, indeed I do not see how you can justly be so. . . .

What is it that you require? Money? I will endeavour to acquire that in a more laborious way than by marrying an heiress. Rank? I will endeavour to raise my family in a nobler way than by marrying a peeress. . . . I do look very anxiously for happiness in married life; I believe I am entitled to it, but sooner than violate what I believe to be my filial duty, I am ready to devote myself to a life of celibacy, and seek elsewhere than in marriage my reward.

When a young man says he is ready to devote himself, in certain circumstances, to a life of celibacy, one hears soon after, with no surprise, that he is engaged to be married. And indeed, in March 1843, we find Stafford Northcote writing to Miss Henrietta Northcote, to announce, not, indeed, his engagement, but his hopes of prospering in his suit. A few days before he had discharged the rather delicate duty of congratulating his father on the prospects of his second marriage. Speaking for himself to Miss Northcote, his mind turns to the religious aspect of matrimony.

What could be a greater *misery* than a great *blessing* if we had no hope that it could endure beyond this life? Our joy would be increased here, only that our *misery* might be made tenfold more bitter hereafter. But *now*, every blessing is a step towards the great consummation of all blessings—life in Christ. I used to fear that marriage would deaden my desire for the Lord's coming. I trust it will do quite the reverse, as at present I feel all the more ardent desire for it.

This is one of the last touches in the letters of the old belief of the Newman Street "connection" in the nearness of the Second Advent. The mother of Miss Cecilia Farrer, the lady to whom Mr Northcote was now betrothed, felt considerable uneasiness about the opinions of her future son-in-law. On these not unnatural apprehensions he writes to Mrs Farrer (March 15, 1843):—

Your principal fear seems to me to be this, that I shall be led away in course of time by a heated imagination and by a fancied sense of duty, or a desire of showing my zeal in the greatness of the sacrifices I am ready to make, to quit my position in society and to break off my social ties—or at least neglect my social duties—in order to devote myself to some wild course of life. I cannot deny that, from the common spectacles which every day presents, and probably from the conduct of many of those with whom I suppose you now identify me, you have too much reason for the fear you entertain; but I can most solemnly assure you that the feelings which I have always nourished and acted upon, and, still more, the explicit teaching which I have received from those of whom you are afraid, and from others whom I am bound to respect, are as diametrically opposed to

such conduct as light is to darkness ; and I should consider myself guilty of a great sin could I for a moment entertain the idea of entering upon such a course. It is not for me to judge others whom I believe to be now in possession of the truth : they may have their justification before God for the steps they have taken ; I consider that I should have no such justification did I follow in their lines. Our circumstances are different ; the measure of light given to us is different ; and so I believe will our conduct be different. You will wonder at me, no doubt, for still believing those persons to be under the direction of the Spirit of God, whom at the same time I disclaim as examples. I know that I cannot expect that you should understand me, and I must resign myself to be misunderstood ; but I trust you will believe me to be honest in what I say, and that you will allow my future conduct to speak for itself.

These matters were thus cleared up, and on August 5, 1843, his marriage with Miss Farrer secured for Mr Northcote all the happiness to which he had confidently looked forward.

The position of private secretary, even to a chief of Mr Gladstone's eminence, does not, of course, make a man at once a prominent figure in politics. Indeed, for a dozen years, Mr Northcote was but a subordinate, though energetic and trusted, worker in administration, not a force in the House of Commons, or in the country. The letters connected with his official existence at this time are of no momentous interest. His labours were important ; he was aiding in the new financial measures of Peel. Mr Gladstone was Peel's right-hand man, and Mr Northcote was Mr Gladstone's. Both were learning their lesson of free trade. But the letters of Mr Northcote are almost silent on his official business. "The general effect of my position is a very pleasing one," he writes to Mr Shirley in December 1842, "and I hope I am not altogether unprofitably employed. Not the least advantage is being so closely connected with so very admirable a person as Mr Gladstone. I hope I shall be '*nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*' ; but if of any one, I would sooner addict myself to his opinions than those of any person with whom I am acquainted." Mr Gladstone's opinions have since been to some extent modified. In a letter to a lady,

on his appointment as Mr Gladstone's secretary, Mr Northcote writes:—

There is but one statesman of the present day in whom I feel entire confidence, and with whom I cordially agree, and that statesman is Mr Gladstone. I look upon him as the representative of the party, scarcely developed as yet though secretly forming and strengthening, which will stand by all that is dear and sacred in my estimation in the struggle which I believe will come ere *very* long between good and evil, order and disorder, the Church and the World, and I see a very small band collecting round him and ready to fight manfully under his leading. In that band I have desired above all things that I might be found, and though I saw little prospect of my being placed in its foremost ranks, I have always contemplated being one of its humbler members, though with many disadvantages. All those disadvantages seem to be suddenly cleared away, and I am left free to go on in the course which I should desire, and with every possible encouragement.

To return to Mr Northcote's letter to Mr Shirley; he was looking forward to a Conservative vacancy at Exeter, as a chance of entering Parliament, and it is curious to note what was then his theory of England's chief offences as a State,—neglect of popular education,—and neglect of missionary enterprise! Another expression of Mr Northcote's general political ideas (which he rarely expressed) was elicited by a reading of the 'Politics' of Aristotle, and is contained in a letter to Mr T. H. Farrer (now Sir Thomas Farrer).¹ He speaks of his lack of opinions on political subjects:—

The reading of the Life of Dr Arnold has quite confirmed me in my idea of setting to work on the 'Politics.' I think I should read history to more profit if I had some formula to test by the facts, because imagination (which, in my case, would mean the study of the imagination of others) must always precede induction. But I hope never again to be without some work of history or biography in hand. I think the effect of Carlyle's 'Past and Present' and 'Coningsby' upon me has been to unsettle my opinions, if I ever had any on political subjects, and to show at the same time the necessity of forming some. Arnold would help me towards the formation, materially, if I

¹ September 8, 1844.

could agree with him ; but even while disagreeing I find a great deal which would assist any one. The problem of all others seems to be the connection of Church and State. If I could adopt Arnold's view, that Christianity was nothing more than a pure system of ethics, I should find no difficulty in assenting to his idea that the Church and the State in a Christian country should be identical. I do not doubt that the State is concerned with more than the conservation of body and goods ; that it has for its aim the overthrow of moral as well as physical evil ; and then of course it follows that the State is concerned with the education of the people, and therefore in a Christian country with the Christian education of the people.

My idea of a great work on Politics is to consider first (by way of preface) what is the origin and object of government. Then to inquire into the duty of the State—first, to itself ; secondly, to its neighbours ; thirdly, to God. In the first place, we should have to consider whether any one form of government were prescribed by God ; then what were the advantages and disadvantages of the several forms which have existed ; then we should go into the various questions of police regulations, of political economy, colonisation, and many others ; then the duty and mode of education, which would bring in the question of the Church. In the second part we should have international law. In the third part we have the obligation of a Christian State to acknowledge God in its public actions, to maintain His Church, and to spread abroad His Gospel. You will think my outline probably audacious.

This was a young man's theory of *πολιτική*, written little more than a generation ago. While these large political and spiritual theories occupied Mr Northcote's leisure, his office work had little of public interest. The brief letters between him and Mr Gladstone are concerned now with the price of potatoes and "foreign bestial," now touch on Mr Ward of Balliol, on surplices, and offertories. We read in one note "the Treasury has not yet answered about the cheeses ;" and in the next paragraph, "I would be sorry to say what I believed to be even the sense given by the six doctors—to the Thirty-nine Articles." Many of Mr Gladstone's communications, too, are just what might be written by "any Minister to any secretary." Proof-sheets are to be sent to various addresses, reports

are to be bound, papers are to be analysed, extracts are wanted, memoranda have to be hunted up, and the performances of Dr Pusey and Mr Ward are a good deal discussed in passing. On February 24, 1845, Mr Northcote announces to a correspondent that Mr Gladstone is no longer a member of the Government. He objected to the intended increase of the grant to Maynooth, and resigned.

In February 1846, the great discussion on free trade in corn was in progress. Sir Robert Peel had announced his intention to do many things that four years earlier he had seemed least likely to do. The famine in Ireland had not perhaps been alone in the work of his conversion. As Mr Browning put it, at Sorrento—

“ For 'tis in my England at home,
Men meet gravely to-day,
And debate if abolishing Corn-laws
Be righteous and wise ;
If 'twere proper scirocco should vanish
In black from the skies.”

There could be no doubt as to Mr Northcote's opinion of the propriety of abolishing scirocco. In a letter of February 28, 1846, we find Mr Frederic Rogers (afterwards Lord Blachford) asking him to write some free-trade articles for the ‘Guardian’: “Two or three cogent, grave, well-informed, judicious, right-minded, and respectful free-trade articles.”

On February 17, Mr Northcote had written to his father: “The monster debate is still going on. . . . Peel's speech seems to have been a very fine one, but the protectionists are by no means the better pleased for it. I hear that twelve of them, with Mr Miles at their head, are now canvassing Westminster for *General Evans*!! They could not go much beyond that.”

In an undated letter of this period, explanatory of the state of affairs, he points out that “the evil in Ireland is that the great mass of the poor *never* have any money to lay out in buying food”—a sufficiently terrible evil. As to the *cause* of the potato-disease, he is content to leave that among the hidden counsels of heaven. We do not lack national sins: our “self-indulgence, love of money,

forgetfulness of God," are not causes of potato-disease probably, but are adequate causes of national misery.

A matter now arose in which Mr Northcote was to take great interest, and a very active part—the candidature of Mr Gladstone for the University of Oxford. It will be remembered that Mr Gladstone resigned his Newark seat in 1846, when he became Peel's Secretary for the Colonies, and was for the time without a seat in Parliament.

In July 1846, Mr Northcote was in communication with Mr Gladstone, to whom he was still acting as secretary, on this topic.

On January 23, 1847, an important letter from Mr Gladstone expresses his own views and wishes. To represent Oxford was his desire, as it had also been the dearest object of Mr Canning's ambition. The Liberal party has apparently determined that the representation of the universities is an injustice and a discredit. This was not the opinion of Mr Canning, nor of Mr Gladstone forty years ago. Mr Gladstone had already discerned that the welfare of the Church of England could not be secured by "a rigid unconditional assertion to the full of every civil and social privilege which she has inherited." Now a constituency like the University was likely to contain many voters of the stiffest kind on this subject. Mr Gladstone held that the pursuit of the Church was "spiritual work." Mr Gladstone's letters cannot be printed here, but any reader of them can perceive that his ideal Church was already much more of a spiritual institution than a mere branch of the Civil Service, and a community politically supreme in its sphere. He deprecates, as far as may be, the introduction of party spirit into religion. About his candidature, while there seemed a chance that Mr Estcourt, then one of the University members, would presently retire, Mr Northcote wrote, on February 11, 1847, to Mr Phillimore, afterwards Sir Robert Phillimore. He wrote from the Board of Trade, where he was still engaged, and the letter appears, for some reason, never to have been sent. Mr Northcote alludes throughout to the letter of Mr Gladstone's (January 23, 1847)

just mentioned, and his paper contains a clear statement of parties in the University, much as they were when Mr Gladstone's election actually took place.

In May 1847, at a meeting of some members of Convocation, Mr Gladstone's cause was supported. Mr Northcote threw himself into the contest with perhaps more eagerness than he ever showed in his own private cause. Mr Gladstone asked him to cease to sign himself "your obliged," "or what shall *I* write." His energy was not to be chilled by the coldness of his friend and brother-in-law, Mr Farrer.

This gentleman held that Mr Gladstone's book on Church and State was not very sagacious, that he did not show much wisdom in going out on the Maynooth Grant, "although his theory compelled him to give most unintelligible explanations of his practice."

The canvassing went on with more than the usual excitement in a university constituency. There was an electioneering Gladstonian rhyme worth remembering. The anti-Gladstonians had difficulty in finding a candidate—

"A cipher's sought,
A cipher's found :
Its worth is naught,
Its name is Round."

The question, as Mr Gladstone put it, was "whether political Oxford shall get shifted out of her palæozoic position into one more suited to her position and work as they now stand." On August 2, Mr Gladstone writes that he heard, not without excitement, the horse's hoofs of the messenger bearing the news of the poll. He was elected by a majority of 173 over Mr Round; the senior member, Sir Robert Inglis, being some 700 votes in advance of him. His letter indicates the extent of his gratitude to those exertions of Mr Northcote which did so much for his success.

The election was important, but less important than that of 1852, of which a full account was prepared and printed by Mr Northcote. As early as December 21, Mr Northcote is writing to Mr Gladstone in consider-

able doubt as to the policy of that statesman's speech on the election of Baron Rothschild for the City of London, and on the disabilities of the Jews. So soon began signs of difference of opinion from the judgment to which, as he says, he has paid "habitual deference." And yet one of Mr Gladstone's letters to himself about "Jews and Turks" might have taught him to anticipate the speech.

Mr Northcote's time and labour had been devoted throughout the summer of 1847 not only to Mr Gladstone's election, but to official work, the reform, or rather abolition, of the Navigation Laws. On May 26, 1847, he writes to Mrs Northcote (Lady Iddesleigh), "I have just finished fytte the first of the Navigation Laws;" and this while he was writing a good deal on the Oxford election for the 'Guardian.' On June 23, he thinks he has "finally completed the Navigation Law papers." The results of Mr Northcote's reflections on the Navigation Laws he published in a pamphlet, "A Short Review of the History of the Navigation Laws of England from the Earliest Times, to which is added a Note on the Present State of the Law. By a Barrister." (James Ridgway: Piccadilly, London, 1849.) This is a very lucid and interesting historical sketch in the interests of free trade. The course of our Navigation Laws is traced in three great periods—from the Act of Richard II. to the Act of Cromwell; next, from the Act of Cromwell to the recognition of American independence; last, from that date to the year 1849.

The general purpose of all Navigation Laws was to encourage our shipping, for reasons of protection no less than for reasons of trade, and, while doing this, to abet our commerce by restricting the privileges of other peoples. The Act of Richard II. enacted that no subject of the king should ship any merchandise, outward or homeward, in foreign bottoms. But this rule could not be maintained, and was mitigated in the very next year.

In the preamble of an Act of Edward VI., it was admitted that these attempts at restriction made wine

and wood "to be daily sold dearer," while "the navy was thereby never the better maintained." Moreover, foreign countries retaliated, and at length Queen Elizabeth repealed the Act of Richard II., "by reason whereof there hath not only grown great displeasure between the foreign princes and the kings of this realm, but also the merchants have been sorely aggrieved and endamaged."

Now this Elizabethan statement really contains the gist of the whole matter. As long as the Navigation Laws lasted, and Mr Northcote did much to secure their repeal, unpleasant History went on repeating herself. Under our old colonial system, the laws worked better, sometimes, circumstances aiding them. For political rather than commercial reasons, "to punish our rebellious colonies and clip the wings of the Dutch," Cromwell passed a stern Navigation Law and provoked a war. We kept the carrying trade with the colonies from the Dutch, at the expense of the plantations. Ireland and Scotland even were excluded from a trade jealously reserved to England and Wales. Naturally the colonies grumbled, in 1671, through the lips of Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia. The laws were *not* for the good of his Majesty's service, or the good of the subject—"On my soul, it is the contrary for both." Minor modifications were gradually introduced, but the law remained very strict, "supported by an extensive and self-supplying colonial empire, and securing a monopoly under the most favourable circumstances." But the United States broke from us, and circumstances wholly ceased to be favourable. Our "infinite variety of paper chains," as Mr Burke described it, was rent asunder. We struggled on with new restrictive devices, irritating the Americans, and damaging the West Indies. In 1794 inadequate concessions were made. In 1817 and 1820, the United States passed retaliatory Acts, and we were busy with that dispute till 1830. Changes in the relations between Portugal, Spain, and their colonies caused our laws to favour the competition of foreigners with our own colonists. "When the Spanish and Portu-

guese colonial systems broke up, ours was no longer tenable." "By the fall of the old systems, a prop was withdrawn from our Navigation Laws; we could no longer regard the retaliation of foreign Powers with indifference, nor afford to cripple our trade by keeping up the restrictions which we had previously maintained at the expense of our colonies." The old objections, felt from the time of Richard II. to that of Elizabeth, revived, now that the colonial empire had broken down. Prussia threatened retaliation. We adopted a system of protection and of "reciprocity treaties," and here Mr Northcote distinguished between false and true reciprocity. "Reciprocity is a complicated delusion," he says. "Reciprocity, such as we desire, is a vision which cannot be grasped; reciprocity, such as we can get, is no real reciprocity, but a mischievous counterfeit." He argued against the ship-owners, who, with one sole exception, were for restriction, that they were discouraging commerce in the interests of shipping—a sufficiently manifest fallacy. He then stated the reasons which made a relaxation, or rather a repeal of the Navigation Laws, desirable.

1. The great alteration made in our colonial system by the abandonment of protective duties.

2. The approaching termination of our treaties of navigation, and the attitude of foreign States.

3. The anomalous position of our law, in consequence of the Austrian treaty of 1838.

4. The increase of annoyance which the restrictions of the law cause to our largely increasing trade, and to our manufacturing enterprise.

The first objection was the gravest, so many disadvantages did it entail on our colonies. We impeded their exports, and crippled their imports. The constant risk of foreign retaliation was also very serious. As to our maritime supremacy, it depends on our commercial marine; but that, in turn, hangs on "an extended commerce and a flourishing colonial empire. *Laws which are bad for colonies and commerce can never be really good for shipping.*"

That sums up the whole matter. Time has apparently justified the arguments of Mr Northcote. "Our success,"

says Sir Thomas Farrer, "has taken place since we repealed our Navigation Laws, and deprived our shipowners of every privilege, whilst we have given them free access to every market for their materials." Over American competition, so highly conceived by De Tocqueville in 1835, we have triumphed, because, "whilst we leave our shipowner to buy his materials and build and buy his ships where and how he pleases, America refuses to place a foreign-built ship upon her register, and imposes a duty of 40 per cent on the materials of shipbuilding."¹ No contention can seem more victorious, more justified by consequences. Yet the Americans are not blind to their own interests, and they differ from these ideas. It is not for amateurs to dabble in this controversy. Suffice it to say, that Mr Northcote's work on the subject of the Navigation Laws was ardent. The results were lucidly stated, and the statement had its influence in bringing about the measure which he desired. This piece of work, too, made him conspicuous for the first time, and was of great influence on his career. In writing to a lady who had asked him for a copy of his pamphlet, Mr Northcote described his own political attitude, especially as to free trade:—

I think I understood Henrietta at the same time to say that you were one of the many who express regret at my having turned, or being about to turn, Whig; and as that is a turn which I devoutly hope I never may take, I cannot resist the temptation of saying a few words of indignant denial. A *free-trader* I have always been since I could form any opinion of my own on the subject; and I advocated the repeal of the Corn Laws,—that is to say, the principle of free trade in corn,—*before* Sir Robert Peel announced his change of sentiment, and, I should also add, *before* Lord John Russell had abandoned his fixed duty. But as regards the characteristic principles of the Whigs (of which free trade is not one) I am as zealously opposed to them now as I ever was, and perhaps more so since I have seen the course of the present Ministry. Personally I have every reason to like them, and I am also convinced that some of them sometimes act upon what they hold to be true principles; but taking them as a body, I look on

¹ Free Trade *versus* Fair Trade. Cassells: London, 1887. Pp. 229, 230.

them as a very miserable set of statesmen, with no views but such as are suggested by the moment, and thinking the great safety of the country to consist in the maintenance of a Whig Cabinet. We Tories, who are now but few in number, are in the habit of saying that government should not be by the people, but for the people; I think the Whigs reverse the sentiment, and consider it should be by the people and for themselves.

As I say I am a free-trader, I must warn you not to confound me with the Manchester school, whom I utterly abjure and detest. The only thing that keeps me from being a Peelite is my lurking fear lest Peel and the Manchester school should some day coalesce. However, upon the whole I am more of a Peelite than anything else. As for the Protectionists, I sympathise with them on many points, but . . . [here follows a curious expression of sentiment, which was to be reversed]. I am angry with them for keeping up the feud with Peel; and I think their recent language about the Queen and the House of Lords proves that the loyalty of many of them is only lip-deep, and that they think more of their own rents and of their hatred to Peel than of the Monarchy or the Constitution. So you see here I am in search of a party, and not very hopeful of being able to find one. I should be willing enough to come into Parliament as a supporter of a Peelite Ministry should one be formed, especially if it had an infusion of Protectionists. A Peelite Ministry with an infusion of Whigs would embarrass me much. One or other of these will, I suppose, be the next combination.

The troublesome times of 1848 do not seem to have caused Mr Northcote much apprehension, nor greatly to have ruffled his habitual peace of mind. The famous meeting of the Chartists, in April, is just referred to in the following letter to his grandfather:—

B. OF TRADE, April 11, 1848.

MY DEAR G.-P.,—We look less like a garrison to-day, and all our *chevaux-de-frise* are removed, and our muskets and bayonets taken away. I have no doubt the preparations which were made had a great effect in preventing mischief; and that it was better to err on the side of over-caution. Nothing like a breach of the peace occurred anywhere but at Blackfriars Bridge, where there were a few broken heads. I trust we may now look for peace and quiet in London. Would we could say the same of Dublin! I think the accounts from Ireland very bad, and that we have little chance of escaping an outbreak.

Yesterday was an idle day, and I am making up leeway, so
no more at present from your affte. G-son, S. H. N.
All well at home ?¹

Meantime his father, down in Devonshire, was writing to him to say that the display of luxury, in contrast with the vast poverty, made him "almost a Radical." In this month Mr Northcote received his commission in the yeomanry, of which he was for many years an energetic member, though perhaps he did not take the same fiery interest in martial affairs as was exhibited by Sir Walter Scott, when he, too, was a yeomanry officer. He brought in a contingent of ten fine young men, "not likely to prove Chartists." Perhaps not the least result of his military experience, *non sine gloria*, was the famous tale of the yeomanry leader and the fixed point. One of the men, who was leading a small force across country, was observed not to take a very straight course. "Why don't you keep your eye on a given point?" said his officer. "So I do, sir." "And what point?" "That old cow, sir," replied the man. The old cow, of course, was a point, but not precisely fixed. Mr Northcote was wont to use the anecdote as an apologue, when people complained that political leaders "did not go straight."

At this time, as Mrs Northcote remarked, "every stray bit of work was apt to attach itself to him," which, as she adds, "made him happy." Questions of sugar bounties and of the Madeira chaplaincy, of the Royal Academy and the Art Unions, of a testimonial to his old tutor, Mr Coleridge, are among the details of the business of the year, at the end of which began the serious, and, in the end, the fatal illness of Mr Northcote, senior.

One of the most troublesome of the many pieces of work which attached themselves to Stafford Northcote now claimed his attention. Prince Albert had already

¹ "The Treasury and Privy Council office buildings, then occupied in part by the Board of Trade, were fortified by the Engineer officers of the Board, and the windows blocked with Blue-books. The chief action of the Engineers, however, was to make the clerks, who, in consequence of a somewhat excited letter of Sir C. Trevelyan's, had brought with them a dangerous armoury of miscellaneous firearms, surrender their weapons, and to lock them up till the day was over."—T. H. F.

conceived the idea of the Great Exhibition, the "palace made of windies" which Thackeray sang, now in humorous and now in serious verse. "The great show was the outcome and festival of the great peace, and of the cosmopolitan wave which followed on the French war. Like Carlyle's married couple, who burnt their bed in the marriage feast, people made a prophecy of what was a funeral pile."

The vast expectation of universal peace and prosperity founded on this huge show and fair was, of course, certain to be disappointed. The world may be "governed with little wisdom," and human nature may be pleased with a feather and tickled with a straw, but these entertainments do little to affect the evolution of humanity. There is no evidence that Mr Northcote took a sentimental or poetical interest in the affair which he conducted, as far as his considerable part was concerned, with tact, and with even self-sacrificing energy. He had, indeed, very much to do with the success of the scheme. His skill in organising, his energetic presence in a chaos of goods and packing-cases and a babel of tongues, were valuable, not less valuable than his conciliatory temper among opposing interests, and in presence of methods distasteful to the old official mind. These pushing methods were tempered by his sweet and conciliatory manners.

It was on June 30, 1849, that Prince Albert called a meeting of the Society of Arts at Buckingham Palace, and explained his ideas. The history of Mr Northcote's connection with the Great Exhibition may be lightly sketched from his correspondence. On January 3, 1850, Prince Albert requested him to meet him at Windsor. Mr Northcote was appointed one of the secretaries to the Commission, and in this recognition of his merit and industry, he observed with pleasure the influence of Mr Gladstone. But Mr Gladstone (January 10, 1850) declines to recognise himself as the source of his friend's promotion. "You have made your own reputation with the members of the Government," says the statesman, and he believes that this repute is not due to connection with himself. Mr Northcote was appreciated by Lord

Taunton, Lord Granville, and the Whigs, and was by them suggested as an adviser whom the Prince could thoroughly trust.

There was at that time a good deal of difference of opinion about the Exhibition. There were opponents who objected simply because the proposal came from Prince Albert. Others disliked the use of Hyde Park, and suggested the Isle of Dogs as a suitable and convenient site for the display. All through 1850, Mr Northcote, as secretary of the Commission and deputy attending, was occupied with every detail of the business, and had frequently to meet Prince Albert. In February, he contemplated the idea of retiring from his post, conceiving himself to be more needed by his family concerns, on the illness of his father, and by his position in Devonshire. On this whole topic, he wrote to Mr Farrer the following important letter :—

PYNES, *February 13, 1850.*

MY DEAR T. H.,—I do not know that I have any right to trouble you with this letter, still less to ask for an answer to it. I am writing partly with a view to clearing my own mind upon a perplexing subject, as well as for the sake of the advice of a better judgment than my own in a matter of much importance to me.

It is quite impossible to say how long my father may yet be spared to us ; but it is clear that it cannot be very long, and it is clear also that I must now remain here till the end. What is doubtful is, whether I ought or ought not to make arrangements for giving up my official position, and living here permanently ; and this is a question which I should answer to myself quickly, because if I answer in the negative, I ought to consult my father upon the arrangement which should be made. In the conversations I have had with him I have spoken of coming here to live altogether, and he is, I think, pleased with this as the most satisfactory arrangement ; but I have not yet fully made up my mind, though I have nearly done so, and for these reasons.

1. I do not see very clearly what could be done here if I did not come to live here. Sir Stafford is just so far removed from dotage as to make him unwilling to give up all idea of his being able to manage the property. At the same time he is really quite unable, and it will in fact be managed by the person, who

ever he may be, who lives with him. I do not think it would do to let my uncle manage for part of the year, and to attempt to manage myself during another part; indeed my ignorance, which would thus be stereotyped, would be a sufficient objection to that. The only course would be to allow my uncle and his family to come and live here permanently, and to come myself as a visitor only. But I cannot make up my mind to this. It would be cutting myself off from all real connection with the place.

2. Besides, I shall in a few years have the undivided responsibility of looking after this place, and I have given so very little attention to country matters, that I am sure I ought to lose no time in studying them, and preparing myself.

These are my two main reasons, which are quite strong enough to act upon if there be no objections that outweigh them. The obvious objection which everybody takes is, that I ought not to give up a profession in which I am making some progress; and I cannot conceal from myself that I am in a position which ought not lightly to be abandoned. I have no knowledge on the point, but I have some reason for thinking it probable that in a year or so I should succeed to some such rank as Sir Denis holds, and my connection with both parties is such as to render me tolerably independent of ministerial changes, as I do not owe it to party favour. Then, again, I have some aptitude for official business, and I am afraid I have very little for country pursuits. Also I am rather afraid of falling back into indolent habits if removed from the excitement of office. Neither do I like the idea of losing sight of my London friends, who are as iron sharpening iron, which I fear will not be the case with people here.

I see I am falling into the forms of pleading, so now for the replication. I think that, on the whole, if I must absolutely choose between the two, the life of a country gentleman is better than the life of an official. I do not abound in ideas, but I see many things which I think I could do in the country, and which perhaps another would not do, whereas I see nothing that I could do in official life which will not be just as well done by others. Without being Utopian I think I may reasonably expect that if I live here among the farmers and the poor, and pay attention to their ways and wants, I may do something towards improving their intelligence, or raising their standard of comfort, which an agent or a steward would certainly not do; whereas I do not believe that one useful measure of Government will suffer in the smallest degree by my place being taken by another. Any man of equal qualification could do all that I could in the Board of

Trade; but no man of howsoever superior qualifications could do what my position would enable me to do here. Therefore, although I believe (to speak highly of myself) that I am spoiling a good red-tapist and converting him into a very indifferent country gentleman, yet I think I am doing the republic a service by turning such advantages as I possess to account in the quarter where aid is most wanted. The welfare of the country does not depend on Parliament alone, or even chiefly, though that is where the show is made.

Besides, I do not see that after all I am doing an unwise thing for my own advancement even in a parliamentary sense. If, in a few years' time, I have made myself master of my duties here, and established my position in the country, and learnt practically something of the wants of my own class and of my neighbours, I think I should come into Parliament naturally and with much more strength than if I were a mere official adventurer. At present I doubt much if Exeter would accept me, so that if I came in at all, it would be for some place to which I was a stranger, and must be on the strength of testimonials from somebody or other, which is not pleasant. If I live here two years, it will be my own fault if I do not command a seat on the first vacancy. That sounds arrogant, does it not? Perhaps it is rather too strong, but I have some faith in myself.

Lastly, now that I have had seven or eight years of official life, I begin to think a little time for reading and reflection would be useful, though I see so much to be done here that I doubt whether I shall read or reflect more than heretofore. But I have been looking at official business too close, and shall correct my judgment a little by learning to look at it from a distance, when perhaps I shall think differently of some of its proportions.

Well, I have answered one of my objects by thus getting my views into shape. I am not actually committed to anything, but I can hardly say I have not made up my mind. If you have patience to read so far, and further patience to tell me whether I am right, or whether I am deceiving myself, I shall be very much obliged. Only let me add, I am not in the least influenced by any sense of weariness of official life; on the contrary, it is daily becoming more pleasant to me, and were the question simply one of preference, I cannot tell which life I should prefer.

—Ever your very afte.,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

A few days after this letter was written, the elder Mr Northcote died (February 22, 1850), and his death was followed by that of his father, Sir Stafford (March 17,

1851), on which the best known Sir Stafford succeeded to the property and title.

Against this withdrawal Mr Farrer advised him strongly, urging that few could do his official work so well as himself. Sir Denis Le Marchant wrote to him (February 13, 1850): "Labouchere and Lord Granville tell me that the Prince cannot bear the idea of your going. He will, I believe, adopt any arrangement to secure even your occasional assistance." Colonel Grey wrote to say that the Prince, while he grieved sincerely for Mr Northcote's bereavement, considered that his withdrawal would be most injurious to the Exhibition. Mr Labouchere wrote in the same spirit of kindness and appreciation. Mr Northcote returned to work, and by May 23 was being supplied with materials for arranging the French and Belgian part of the Exhibition. One or two letters to Mrs Northcote (Lady Idlesleigh) speak of the death of Sir Robert Peel, of the prospects of the Exhibition, of his own, and his own too happy character, and of the sort of times Mr Gladstone expects.

BOARD OF TRADE, *April 25, 1850.*

I saw Gladstone yesterday, and had a good deal of talk with him. He thought I ought not abruptly to give up my place, but gradually to draw off, and only to take such work as was the continuation of what I had been committed to, and which could be done in the country. He was out of spirits himself about public matters, and did not paint parliamentary life in rose colour, but thought my position would perhaps be less embarrassing than his own in the sort of times he expects.

He is distressed at the position Peel has taken up, and at the want of sympathy between those who for so many years acted cordially together; and he looks forward to serious Church troubles, which, he thinks, might possibly drive him out of Parliament.

BOARD OF TRADE, *July 2, 1850.*

What a sad thing this accident of poor Peel's is! There seems every ground to fear the worst, though I have just heard a rather improved account again. The symptoms this morning were very unfavourable, and I believe there have been convul-

sions, which are highly alarming in such a case. This is the third and critical day, and you will probably learn something decisive from the latest bulletins in the 'Globe.' It is quite a sight to see the throng of inquirers.

Of course there are all sorts of conjectures as to the effect which his removal will have upon the state of things in Parliament and the country, and the general feeling is what a great loss he will be, though perhaps that admits of question in some respects.

B. OF TRADE, *July 3, 1850.*

I return Thomas Henry's letter, which is a very nice one. I wish the one thing wanting could be supplied, even though I cannot say I would supply it exactly as he wishes. As to what he says of living more in the present and less in the future and the past, I do most heartily agree, and I cannot help thinking that the faculty of doing so makes up to us commonplace souls for the want of the true fire: and yet is it not rather a degrading thing too? ought we not to be exercising man's peculiar property of looking forwards and backwards, instead of being content with the present? I am beginning to lament over myself rather in the opposite sense, and to be disgusted because when I am at Pynes I really care for nothing but Pynes, and when I am in London I care for nothing but London. It seems base to be so easily happy, when one might so easily be unhappy, in one's work. I should not care if my happiness proceeded from any sound view of the fitness of things; but I am afraid it is the fruit of simple indolence, and that I should be just as contented if I were set to grind coffee or make up prescriptions, as when I am farming or officialising. However, there is one drawback to being happy here, which is, that I have not got you and my pretty little men to talk to. You will see my handiwork in the 'Chronicle,' not in the leading article but in the paper which it is upon. The names at the end are a blunder. As for the 'Times,' it is perfectly disgusting.

So the worst has come of poor Peel's accident. There did not seem much hope all yesterday, indeed it was evident to all who had seen him the few days before, that he was not in a state to bear such a shock. I parted from him at three o'clock that Saturday, just two hours before the accident, and was to have been with him again early on Monday morning. He was looking thoroughly jaded and ill; but they say Lady Peel remarked upon his high spirits, which certainly did not strike me. He must have had great suffering.

I am going to the *levée* to-day, and have some letters to write

before I start; so with best love to all, I remain your most devoted and affectionate.

A private letter to Lady Northcote of 1851 may here find its place—a narrative of social events and pleasures long forgotten. The note seems to show that it was not Lord Derby who first made a humorous application (to Mr Disraeli) of the story of Benjamin's mess.

UNIVERSITY CLUB, *June 7, 1851.*

Thos. Henry and I went to see Rachel last night, in a very stupid play—"Polyeucte." I admired her as much as ever, though the part was not exactly the one for her, being a case of duty triumphant over feeling; whereas she decidedly shines in feeling triumphant over duty. The Merivales were sitting next us, and he was rich on the subject of religious liberty, which is decidedly infringed by the hero of the piece; and was drawing parallels between Lord Torrington and the Governor of Armenia, to our great edification. He said Lord Torrington was in the lobby of the House of Commons the other day and overheard a member saying to another, what a mess Lord Torrington had got into. "Ah," says the other, "I think it's Ben Hawes who has got him into it, because Benjamin's mess is five times as great as anybody else's."

His place at the Board of Trade Mr Northcote resigned in August 1850, to the great regret of his chiefs—Mr Labouchere and Sir Denis Le Marchant.

The correspondence of 1851 is meagre. On December of that year Mr Gladstone is "sadly and sorely grieved to hear about your health." The work of the Exhibition, in fact, had told on Mr Northcote's weak point, or perhaps had caused the weakness. His heart was slightly affected, and he was ordered to be idle by his doctors. This was the beginning of the end that was still more than thirty years distant. We all carry about our death with us: the work of 1851 showed him where *his* enemy lay. He had already been appointed, on October 17, a Companion of the Order of the Bath—for honour and trouble came crowding in this busy and distracted year.

To be done with the Exhibition, it may suffice to say that Prince Albert warmly approved of Sir Stafford Northcote's concluding report and summary.

CHAPTER IV.

BEGINNING OF HIS PARLIAMENTARY CAREER.

ONE of the last letters which Sir Stafford Northcote received in 1851 was a short note from Lord Granville, humorously announcing his own appointment to the Foreign Office. Lord John Russell had evicted Lord Palmerston, whose sympathy with the *coup d'état* in France was to the taste neither of the country nor of the Court. In less than two months—in February 1852—Lord Palmerston had his tit for tat, as he said, and “turned out John Russell” on the Militia Bill. Lord Derby came in with a weak and tolerated Ministry—“care-takers,” as they are now called—and with a mild hankering after Protection. This was checkmated by the renewed activity of the old Free Trade League, and by the general conviction. Mr Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer. There was a dissolution in July. There was general uneasiness about the intentions of the ruler of France, and the Volunteer movement began.

In the early part of a year which witnessed his first advances to a parliamentary constituency, Sir Stafford Northcote's health was still suffering from the effects of work at the Exhibition. Writing to him in February, and looking forward to a dissolution, Mr Gladstone speaks somewhat anxiously about his health. Should there be a contest at Oxford, Mr Gladstone says that his own seat there “would be ill purchased by your casting-vote, were you, by going up to give it, to diminish by a hair's-breadth the likelihood of your full recovery.” Sir Stafford's own political position at this uneasy time, when no Government had the real confidence of the country, is sketched in an earlier letter to Lady Northcote (April 19, 1851): “I am clearly making up my mind to a position a good way towards the Protectionist side. Things are going on so that I would waive a great many objections, and accept a great many measures that I do not think politic, in order to get the Whigs out and a Stanley Ministry

in—though perhaps the mischief one most dreads is actually done.” The Whigs were anxious to have his support, but he distrusted them as a party. A critic remarks, and it is my own opinion, that it was mainly questions of the Church and religion which kept him in the Conservative camp from the first.

In February 1852, the Whig Ministry *was* out, and the Derby Ministry in, but not in vigorous condition. Protection was out of the question. As Sir Stafford wrote to Mr Gladstone, August 3, 1852, “Protection begins at home,—on the Treasury bench.” In April, Mr Gladstone had requested Sir Stafford to be named as one of his executors in his will, in place of Mr James Hope Scott, whose name he removed when Mr Hope Scott entered the Church of Rome. This is worth mentioning, as an illustration of the close private as well as political confidence and friendship then uniting two men whom circumstances were to sever. Even in this letter Mr Gladstone foresees so many changes and chances, that, though well pleased on a short view of affairs, he cannot but feel it a duty to avoid long views, and shun speculations. On May 4, Lord Granville wrote to Sir Stafford: “Lord John and I are restrained from venturing on the forlorn-hope of getting you as Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, by the account Farrer gives of the villanous tyranny of your doctor. Your Address has made me fear that we are not, at all events for the present, likely to be joined on the same side in political warfare; but I hope that you will always allow me to reckon yourself as one of my most sincere private friends.”

The Address referred to was issued in answer to a request to stand as Conservative candidate for the city of Exeter, which was, however, ultimately declined.

This document, printed here, contains a brief and clear exposition of Sir Stafford Northcote’s attitude at the beginning of his attempts to enter on his political career.

GENTLEMEN,—Having received a requisition, respectably and numerously signed, to allow myself to be put in nomination as a Conservative candidate for the city of Exeter at the approach-

ing election, I hasten to return you my sincere thanks for the honour you have done me, and to assure you of my entire willingness to respond to your appeal.

I come before you on this occasion not as an entire stranger, and I trust that it is unnecessary for me to detain you with a lengthened profession of those Conservative principles which my family has always upheld, and to which I cordially adhere. If an ardent loyalty to the Monarchy, a no less ardent love of that constitutional liberty which has long been the peculiar boast of Englishmen, and a firm, undivided, and deeply rooted attachment to the Church of England be qualifications for your confidence, I fearlessly claim it at your hands. A Conservative Administration is now in power; it needs the support of all who are opposed to the headlong progress of democracy, and I for one am fully convinced that upon the result of the approaching appeal to the country the fate of many of our most honoured institutions greatly depends.

While, however, I profess myself to be on general grounds a warm supporter of Lord Derby's Government, I feel it necessary to reserve my judgment upon one question with respect to which the course which his lordship may take is still doubtful. I have a strong individual opinion that the long-agitated question of Agricultural Protection is upon the eve of a final settlement. It is my full expectation that Lord Derby will perceive that the reimposition of a duty on corn is no longer possible, and that whether he may or may not bring forward any scheme for the relief of the agricultural portion of the community, he will not attempt to revive protecting imports. Should I be unfortunately mistaken in this respect, and should a reactionary measure be introduced, it would be impossible for me to support it, though even in that case I should be unwilling to withdraw my general confidence from a Conservative Government; for I am one of those who have long lamented that differences upon commercial policy should divide those who ought to be united in the firm support of peace, order, and good government at home, and the maintenance of friendly relations with the old allies of the British nation abroad.

Before I conclude, I ought perhaps to touch upon another subject, which I know to be one in which many of the electors of Exeter take a great interest,—I mean the policy to be pursued towards our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. No special question is now under discussion in connection with this point, nor am I aware that any such is likely to be raised; I can therefore only state the general tenor of my opinions. Every day's experience more fully satisfies me of the greatness of the

blessing we enjoy in our Reformed Protestant Church. While I am earnestly desirous to secure to every denomination of Christians the same religious liberty which I claim for the body to which I myself belong, I consider it my duty to oppose all pretensions inconsistent with the welfare of the Church of England. I have viewed with regret the spirit in which the Roman Catholics have responded to the liberal policy which has so long been pursued towards them, and the recollection of the events of the last two years will materially weigh with me in the consideration of any measure on which I may have to pronounce a judgment. I cannot, however, go the length to which some are prepared to proceed, of proposing a reversal of the policy to which I have alluded.

In the summer of 1852, and in January 1853, Sir Stafford was much occupied with the business of Mr Gladstone's Oxford election. A pamphlet published by Sir Stafford, in 1853, contains the gist of the matter.¹

When the dissolution of 1852 approached, the opponents of Mr Gladstone conceived that his friends might have been alienated by his votes on Jewish Disabilities and the Papal Aggression. Mr Gladstone's opponents therefore determined to enter a third candidate, and to this resolution they adhered, in spite of a declaration signed by 1276 electors. Dr Marsham, of Merton, was their man, and, though his resident supporters would have withdrawn him, the non-resident insisted on the trouble and expense of a poll. Mr Gladstone's majority was 350. In the debate of November, Mr Gladstone attacked Mr Disraeli's Budget; the Government was defeated, and in January the Tories again contested Mr Gladstone's Oxford seat. The election was a curious affair of obscure intrigues; Lord Compton being proposed, apparently without his knowledge, or against his will, Mr Perceval was suddenly put forward. Mr Gladstone had a majority of 87 on a small poll. These intrigues gave Sir Stafford plenty of trouble, and are nearly as mysterious as the Gowrie Conspiracy. The activity of a Dr Lemprière added a kind of mythical interest.

¹ A Statement of Facts connected with the Election of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, &c. Oxford: Parker, 1853.

Mr Gladstone entered the new Government, a sort of Coalition Government, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. On December 1852, Sir Stafford wrote to him thus, with reference to the proposal that he should serve on a Commission for reorganising the Board of Trade: "I am rather a stiff Conservative, and do not feel at all sure that the next Administration will be one that I can work under, though if you form a leading element in it I can scarcely imagine my having any doubts." And, two days later, he adds, "I am free of the doctors, and shall have no difficulty on that score." He does not want a salary for his services to the Commission, "only not to drop out of sight." His political and personal hopes and fears, at this moment, are contained in the following letter to Lady Northcote (December 23):—

THE ATHENÆUM, Dec. 23, 1852.

There has been a great deal of difficulty and a great deal of delay in the adjustment of the Cabinet, and I believe some very curious proceedings have taken place; but it is now understood that the arrangements are really satisfactory, and will shortly be announced. I am nearly sure that Lord Palmerston has come in,—a step of the highest importance. I confess I am painfully anxious as to the result, for I have had a long and desperate argument with Gladstone, which has not altogether satisfied me that I could accept an office even if one were offered me, and I have once or twice been on the point of making up my mind to request him not to give me the chance, as it would be painful to have to refuse. But I am now inclined to wait till the list is actually out, and to see whether it would be possible to join them without sacrificing my Conservative character. I cannot get over my prejudice against Lord John Russell, nor my strong aversion to entering the House of Commons under his leadership. If we are to be at liberty to treat him as a convert, and a comparatively insignificant member of a Conservative Cabinet, it may do; but I cannot put up with less than this. It is a comfort to see that the Radical papers are taking this line, and beginning to abuse him accordingly. Lord Palmerston's junction, too, gives the whole affair a different complexion. Instead of a mixed Government of Peelites and Russellites, it may be a Peelite Government supported by the moderate Whigs of all shades and classes.

A few days later he says, "It does one good to be

brought into contact with Gladstone now and then." On February 12, 1853, Mr Gladstone wrote to him, quoting the proverb of "the willing horse," and asking him to aid in the revision of packet contracts. To this work he set himself, and writes in February to Lady Northcote, from the Board of Trade, saying that he "dreams pathetically of the Warren Hill, and of lots of cock-pheasants running about on it."

All this spring there were coquettings with constituencies at Totnes, Taunton, and Exeter, which came to no definite result, nor is it worth while to dally over the local politics of many years ago. Sir Stafford's absence from Pynes, at his official business in London, was reckoned against his chances of success. He was busy with many matters—for example, with a report for the Prince Consort on the Department of Science and Art. Mr Labouchere offered him the secretaryship of a Commission to inquire into the affairs of the City of London. He was occupied with the business of the Volunteers at Exeter, and, objecting to sing at the Yeomanry mess at Sidmouth, he added to the hilarity of the evening by telling "the historical story." This was a mixed burlesque of history in verse, with choruses in various tunes. He entertained 2000 people of Exeter in July, at a *fête* in the grounds of Pynes. On October 15, he withdrew from the English Churchman's Union, conceiving that it was no affair of theirs to censure the orthodoxy of the Primate.

Business of an important and permanent kind was not lacking. In company with Sir Charles Trevelyan, Sir Stafford Northcote had been invited to draw up a report on the organisation of the permanent Civil Service. The deficiencies of that Service—above all, the imperfect method of conferring appointments—were at that time notorious, and they are clearly summed up in the extremely lucid report. In place of drawing into its ranks the best possible young men, the Civil Service was a kind of refuge for the helpless. "Admission into the Civil Service is, indeed, eagerly sought for; but it is for the unambitious and the indolent and incapable that it is chiefly desired. Those whose abilities do not warrant

an expectation that they will succeed in the open professions, . . . and those whom indolence of temperament or physical infirmities unfit for active exertions, are placed in the Civil Service, where they may obtain an honourable livelihood with little labour and no risk." How appointments were conferred, and what manner of life the officials led, may be gathered with ease and diversion, if not with serious accuracy, from the amusing 'Memoirs' of Mr Edmund Yates, and from Mr Anthony Trollope's novel, 'The Three Clerks.' The report avers that the country had to pay salaries of men absent on pleas of ill-health, and pensions to others whose health would never have allowed them to pass a medical examination. Within the Service there was not enough competition to encourage industry, and *trop de zèle* was the last danger to be apprehended. "The feeling of security which this state of things necessarily engenders tends to encourage indolence, and thereby to depress the character of the Service." The possessors of patronage in each case "will probably bestow the office upon the son or dependant of some one having personal and political claims upon him"—a condition of things which was soon after found impossible by William Buffy, in 'Bleak House.' "While no pains have been taken in the first instance to secure a good man for the office, nothing is done, after the clerk's appointment, to turn his abilities, whatever they may be, to the best account." Thus for the higher appointments it often became necessary to seek a competent person outside of the office, and "this is necessarily discouraging to Civil servants." The Service, with its 16,000 salaried officials, was, moreover, "fragmentary" and disjointed.

The question as to the remedies was settled thus, in the report of Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote, and, practically, their conclusions were accepted in later legislation. They decided that it was better to catch officials young, so to speak, and train them for their duties. They should be made "constantly to feel that their promotion and future prospects depend entirely on the industry and ability with which they discharge their

duties." The first step should be "the establishment of a proper system of examination before appointment;" and this was the beginning of the present vast organisation of examiners and examinees. To that system, as to all mortal institutions, the objections are gross and palpable; but it is not possible, perhaps, to suggest any better system. Examinations are not the end and aim of education (as many appear to hold), but at least they test a man's disposition to work and take pains. This immense advantage, on the whole, they possess over the old system of patronage. Previously, while examinations were not by any means unknown, they had been of a private, therefore of a lax and slovenly description, more or less like Charles Perrault's perfunctory examination, in the dead of night, before the Faculty of Law at Orleans, or that Oxford inquiry into historical knowledge, which put one question, "Who founded the University?" and was content with the erroneous reply, "King Alfred." When heads of offices or principal clerks tested young men in whose success "they took a lively interest," the conclusion was foregone. The report recommended, therefore, a Central Board of Examiners, "composed of men holding an independent position, and capable of commanding general confidence." "We are of opinion that this examination should be, in all cases, a competing literary examination," with proper inquiry into physical and moral qualifications. "We see no other mode by which (in the case of inferior no less than superior offices) the double object can be attained of selecting the fittest person, and of avoiding the evils of patronage." Nor has the wisdom of posterity found any other solution. "It is only by throwing the examinations entirely open that we can hope to attract the proper class of candidates." Proficiency in "history, jurisprudence, political economy, modern languages, political and physical geography, besides the staple of classics and mathematics, should be made directly conducive to the success of young men desirous of entering into the public service."

These were, on the whole, and omitting some practical details, the recommendations which Sir Stafford Northcote

helped to urge on the country and the Government. The results were the well-known changes in the making of appointments to, and in the organisation of, the Civil Service. It cannot be said that reform was uncalled for, as we learn from the report that, in the opinion of an eminent official, only four young men had, in many years, been introduced into his own office "on the ground of well-ascertained fitness."

While Sir Stafford Northcote was engaged on the difficult and complicated inquiry about the Civil Service, its needs, its remedies, and in studying the ideas of specialists in official work and in education, he did not neglect practical training for the political career. He took lessons in elocution from Mr Wigan, the actor, and he writes thus to Lady Northcote (December 8, 1853):—

I had a grand set-to last night. Wigan said he should like to hear me repeat some speech of my own. I said I could not do that, but that I would make him a harangue on the state of the Civil Service if he liked; so I began, and, both to his and my own amazement, spoke for an hour and forty minutes. He is to give me his criticisms when I next go to him, which will be on Saturday morning. I suspect I displayed more of my faults in this way than in reading or speaking Shakespeare and Curran; but he said I ought to make a good speaker, for that my voice had shown not the slightest symptom of fatigue during the whole speech, which was delivered louder than he thought would be necessary to be heard all over the House of Commons. He checked me several times for becoming too excited and high-pitched.

In 1854, any one who listened might have heard, like Kubla Khan, "ancestral voices prophesying war." But Sir Stafford Northcote being busy with his private combat against the ancient customs of the Civil Service, has little to say in his letters about Russia, Turkey, and Crimean affairs. He read 'The Coming Struggle,' an Apocalyptic and much-advertised tract, and found it "delicious, but no one but Trevelyan who believes in it." "There is a terrible storm in the Civil Service about our plan," he writes to Lady Northcote (March 2), "and Gladstone relies so much on me that I must not desert him till it is fairly over." Mr Gladstone was in consultation

with him about a possible clause in a "Bill for the Total Abolition of Oaths in the Colleges and University of Oxford." At this time he had views about standing for South Devon, and canvassed there, without, as he notices, bringing on the disagreeable symptoms in his heart. "Watson told me they would probably always continue, and give me warning from time to time if I did what I ought not."

An early reference to the Russian war, declared in March, occurs on March 26: "They say there will be great commotions in Germany if the war comes on. The little kings will swear by Russia, and the people are all ready to pitch into the kings if they take the Czar's part, so that a regular social war will be coming about." But these hints are mingled with more copious remarks about organising a new Archery Club, and with efforts to secure a competent drawing-master for the School of Art at Exeter. By November 18 he says, "What anxious times are these! . . . I cannot help sympathising with the Russian general's speech to Captain Fellowes, that our charge (at Balaklava) was an *attaque de fous*." On December 7, he is going down to Downing Street "to leave an energetic protest which I have written against the scandalous idea of appointing Mr Hayward to succeed Lord Courtenay at the Poor Law Board, passing over all the meritorious Civil servants there in favour of a man . . . with no claims but those of a violent political writer." On this matter of Mr Hayward's appointment, Mr Gladstone wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote (December 7), disclaiming any connection with the business. But he is "aware of no reason why the appointment should excite indignation. I do not know Mr Hayward well, but I believe him to be an honourable, able, and accomplished man." In a later note (December 20), Mr Gladstone says that he is "not only not offended by Sir Stafford's letter about Mr Hayward, but that nothing which you say can offend me. But I do not agree with you, which is quite another matter."

On February 26, 1855, Sir Stafford Northcote, being then at Pynes, received this telegram from Mr Gladstone: "If

you wish for Parliament, come up instantly without fail to me; if not, answer by telegraph." There was a seat vacant at Dudley, and Lord Ward, who appears almost to have owned the constituency, was anxious that Sir Stafford Northcote should present himself as a candidate. On February 28 he was at Dudley, whence he wrote to Lady Northcote:—

I am here, and on the point of beginning operations, but can hardly say yet whether I am likely to go on with them. I am to meet a number of influential people in about half an hour, and shall then find how the land lies. Two or three candidates have been talked of, but I imagine no one has any real chance against Lord Ward, and Ward himself treats the idea of his losing the seat as an absurdity. His agent, Mr Smith, with whom I am staying, is more cautious, though the upshot of his speculations is that he does not much expect a contest at all. I imagine the whole affair will be of a very different complexion from that of last year. My strength lies (beyond Ward's support) in my having been at the Board of Trade, and being able to take the character of "a man of business." There will be no personal bother about Puseyism, but some trouble about Church rates. I shall come out strong with Civil Service reform, which Mr Smith says will be popular.

Lord Ward is a staunch Peelite, and very anxious that the borough should be represented by a pure animal of that breed, but if there was to be any admixture he would rather it were Derbyism than Radicalism. He applied to Gladstone and Sydney Herbert to recommend him a candidate of this complexion, and Gladstone said he thought it would be as nearly as possible mine. Ward wanted to run down and see me at Pynes, but Gladstone persuaded him to send for me. I had a long talk with him before I came here, and I believe we agree upon almost everything at present. He takes rather a higher Church line than I should do, but is pretty liberal.

On March 9 he was returned for Dudley, and at last entered the House which, with a brief interval after 1857, was to be the scene of his principal work almost to the end.

On March 16, Sir Stafford Northcote took his seat, and voted in three divisions. "I think I shall like the House," he writes, "but it is 'hearly days' yet." He sat among the moderate Conservatives, and voted (in the minority) in favour of Mr Cobbett's motion respecting "Short Time

for Women and Children in Factories." "It is curious," he says, "to find Mr Cobbett's father's son such a thorough gentleman, plain, sensible, and temperate both in manner and expression." Mr Bright "spoke on the other side, but very ineffectively."

His seat at Dudley did not seem likely to be held without at least a chance of trouble. "Lord Palmerston," he wrote to Lady Northcote, "has lost almost all the credit he had in the country. It is nobody's interest to overthrow the Government, for such overthrow would be preceded by a dissolution which nobody wants. . . . I hope myself that it is not coming this year. If the Government are cautious, and Dizzy is not carried away by some fit of temper or eagerness, things may go on for a good while. Sir G. C. Lewis is a terribly dull speaker after Gladstone, but he is therefore the less likely to provoke a storm."

Mr Gladstone had opposed Mr Roebuck's motion for a committee to make inquiry into the conduct of the Crimean War. The motion was carried, Mr Gladstone resigned, and was succeeded by Sir George Cornewall Lewis as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

On March 17, Sir Stafford was girding himself up to defend his Civil Service scheme in the House against Mr Thompson Hankey. He was also concerned in business little to his mind.

I am to dine quietly with Mr Sotheron and Sir William Heathcote, to begin the great Oxford Conferences. It is a sad business to be deliberating in this way whether we shall withdraw Gladstone, and I don't think any good will come of it. Personal feeling apart, I think we shall do best in keeping him as our candidate, at all events unless any communication comes from the enemy, which is very unlikely. . . . There seems to be some real expectation of peace; at least the Russians have opened the Conference in the most favourable manner. The difficulty is apprehended more from Louis Napoleon than any one else.

He was not yet by any means at home in the House. On March 20 he writes:—

It is rather lengthy work sitting as I did yesterday from 4 o'clock till 1 A.M.—nine hours—and there is a disadvantage in

not knowing very many members, and in sitting in a different part of the House from most of those I do know. My usual neighbours are very nice people—Sir W. Heathcote, Charlie [i.e., Charles Lushington, his brother-in-law], Egerton, Seymour Fitzgerald, Liddell, Mowbray, and Lord Blandford; but when they are not in their places I am in the midst of a heap of Irish members, who are not the best of company. I send you a sort of sketch of the way we sit; of course the benches hold many more than I note, and the Irish members spread themselves, when there is a large attendance of them, on our two front benches. I am afraid to go and sit anywhere but where I do, at least until I have had an opportunity of making myself a distinct character, for they judge of you a good deal by your place in the House.

On the Fast Day (March 20) he went to St Margaret's, with the House—that is to say, about 150 members and the Speaker. Oddly enough I was placed next to Disraeli, who entered into conversation with me very amicably afterwards, and agreed with me that the sermon was exceedingly “flash.” Every now and then the preacher paused at the end of a flowery sentence, and the whole congregation coughed and sneezed approvingly, exactly as if they were cheering. I was a good deal disgusted.

Of his maiden speech he writes, March 26:—

My *speech* the other night was a very short one, and intended rather as an experiment. I was not in the least nervous, and found I could think and decide “upon my legs,” as they say, so I shall feel comfortable for the future. I was very well received, especially considering that there were very few of my particular friends in the House, and that the subject of Civil Service reform, and particularly of the competition system, is exceedingly unpopular in the House. I shall be in no hurry to speak again, and least of all upon that subject, unless it is forced upon me, and in any case I shall not make a great speech upon it. Sir John Pakington's Education Bill is the opportunity I am next looking forward to. My neighbours, while I was speaking, were George Buck, Charlie, and Ker Seymer, who of course cheered me, and Roundell Palmer was sitting opposite. The Government benches were pretty full, but they of course were ominously silent. Most of the cheering came from the Layard neighbourhood! where there is a great mass of unattached talent sitting below the Peelites and the Manchester school, such as Laing, Roebuck, Layard, Drummond, Walter, &c. Dizzy did me the

honour to turn round and look very attentive. You see altogether I am not in very bad company. Sir John Pakington asked to be introduced to me, and we were very amicable.

At a *levée*, on March 26, he had some talk with Prince Albert, who congratulated him on entering the House, and who with some reason objected to the use of the expression "first-rate." It is not Addisonian English.

In these familiar letters the gravest things in political partisanship are but lightly treated. Thus, when Lord John Russell came back from Vienna, and was not able to explain very happily his conduct, abroad and at home, in the negotiations for peace, Sir Stafford writes (July 7)—

What a terrible exposure Lord John has made of himself! . . . I really felt quite sorry for him last night. Upon the whole, I should think these disclosures must shake the Government, and certainly they must help the peace party: it won't do now to single out Gladstone as the advocate of a dishonourable peace, as Lord John acknowledges that both he and Drouyn de Lhuys thought, and still think, the Austrian terms admissible. Well, such is life.

His political ideas, especially about the "Coalition" he detested so, are frankly expressed in the following note:—

I made a pretty successful speech yesterday, though it is poorly reported in the 'Times' to-day. The House was very full and very impatient, and I rose after an earnest appeal from Sir W. Clay that there might be no more speeches; but I managed to get a very good hearing, and plenty of cheers from my own side. I did not make a very long speech, but I fancy it was the best I have made yet. You see I inflict all my vanity upon you! Phillimore made a capital speech.

It is likely enough that the Government may be upset within the next few days. An attempt will be made to-night to force the discussion of Sir E. B. Lytton's vote of censure to-morrow. It is rumoured that Lord John will go out, and be succeeded by Lord Elgin, but even this may not save the Cabinet. The worst of it is, there is nobody to come in who will do any better. Now the fruits of that miserable Coalition, which I have always abhorred, are beginning to taste bitter. Oh, what a position the Peelites might now have had if they had never joined it! As it

is, they have rendered their accession to power impossible at present, and we are reduced to Derby, Dizzy, and Ellenborough. It is a bad business, I fear.

Later he adds, characteristically, for though he had disliked Lord John Russell, he was a very bad hater—

You will be edified at hearing that I am taking up the cudgels for Lord John Russell, against whom I think there has been rather an unfair cry. . . . I voted in the majority last night, for disposing of Spooner and Maynooth. I hope my constituents will not be very angry.

This, he presumes, will ruin his character at Exeter. "I hope they won't burn me more than in effigy."

Here the correspondence practically ends for 1855.

CHAPTER V.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

THE year 1855 is memorable in the life of Sir Stafford Northcote, and in the history of the county of Devonshire, for the starting of a reformatory school for boys. This was an example, on a convenient scale, of the good that a country gentleman may do, in the least pretentious way, by a wise use of his influence, and a judicious employment of the means most readily at hand. To understand what was done, it may be well to give a short sketch of the attempts previously made to rescue boys on the verge, or over the verge, of crime. This admirable work, more than anything else, engaged Sir Stafford Northcote, both in and out of Parliament, between 1854 and 1858.

The reformatory movement occupied the mind of the public greatly after 1850; and as its importance is now somewhat forgotten, owing to the institution of a wider system of education, it is worth while to bring to recollection the various steps taken in the institution of reformatory schools for the young in substitution of jails.

The great Howard had not omitted to consider this branch of philanthropy, and in 1773 had called attention to the discipline of juvenile delinquents. In 1780, the Philanthropic Society of London, which is now familiar by reason of its Reformatory School at Redhill, was set on foot by private subscription. In 1815, the Prison Discipline Society was founded, to save young offenders from contact with more hardened offenders. In 1817, the Stretton Institution was commenced at Stretton on Dunsmore, in Warwickshire, founded by the Warwickshire magistrates.

In 1830, the Hon. Amelia Murray and Captain E. P. Brenton were making efforts to rescue children from a life of wrong-doing, and they established a Children's Friend Society, for the purpose of reclaiming the neglected and destitute children that infested the streets of the metropolis, and to find employment for them after they had given proof of their reformation. In 1838, an Act of Parliament was passed (1 & 2 Vict. c. 82), which had for its principal object the establishment of a separate prison for juvenile offenders (Parkhurst), but which also contained a clause enabling the Crown to place young offenders under sentence of transportation or imprisonment at any charitable institution for their reformation, on terms which would give the directors of such institution legal control over them.

English reformatory schools, Sir Stafford Northcote remarked, derived their pedigree from these three sources—the Philanthropic Society, the Juvenile Prison at Parkhurst, and the Children's Friend Society of Captain Brenton and the Hon. Miss Murray.

The Philanthropic Society had as its object the rescue of the children of convicts, and the reformation of those children who had themselves been convicted; but gradually the education of children of convicts had been given up, and the number of convicts had increased. The Rev. Sydney Turner, who was chaplain of the institution, after a visit to the French reformatory at Mettray, had established the agricultural colony at Redhill.

Perhaps the reformatory movement had been more im-

portant on the Continent than in England. In 1810, M. de Fellenberg established at Hofwyl a labour school for beggars and criminal children. In Prussia, near Düsseldorf, in 1816, Count Von der Recke and his father first received a few wretched children into their home; then the father gave up his house, and finally purchased an estate for them.

In 1833, Dr Wichern and others established the Rauhe Haus near Hamburg for the worst class of street vagrants, establishing therein the "family" system. In 1852, the Rauhe Haus consisted of a hamlet of twenty houses and one hundred children. The "family" system has proved more advantageous for influencing the affections of the children than the larger institutions.

The Rauhe Haus formed the type on which the great French reformatory of Mettray was cast. But it also arose from the system of detention which prevailed in France, and which had induced M. Lucas, Inspector-General of French Prisons, to form an association for the "patronage" of young convicts, and to assist them in their efforts to obtain honest employment. The society induced the Government to appoint a commission to inquire as to the best means of reforming the young. The commission reported in favour of an agricultural colony, as involving life in the open air and greater distance from temptation.

M. de Courteille, the friend of M. de Metz, one of the commissioners, offered his estate at Mettray for the purpose, and in 1840 they began to receive their colonists; in 1855 there were 400 boys. By the year 1853, in the various institutions based on the model of Mettray, there were 6443 children received.

Such were the various convergent movements which awakened the public sentiment to the necessity of extending reformatory institutions in England, and which were greatly furthered by Miss Carpenter's work, published in 1851, on Reformatory Schools.

It was established that the most vicious and degraded children could be brought under moral and religious control, and made useful members of society, provided that those who engaged in the work undertook it in a spirit

of enlightened philanthropy; that more than merely voluntary support was necessary, and that the parents themselves ought to contribute to the maintenance of their children.

The Act establishing Parkhurst contained a clause authorising the sending of convicts to Redhill under conditional pardons. The clause had been enforced, and as a doubt arose as to whether it was not necessary that the boy should not have been sentenced if not to transportation yet to a long period of imprisonment, the courts began to inflict nominally severe sentences for slight offences in order to get the children into Redhill. About this time, too, Miss M. Carpenter, Mr M. D. Hill, and Mr Sydney Turner called together a conference at Birmingham to discuss the reformatory cause. The meeting was small, but their published report was of great importance. It seems to have been the cause of the appointment of a committee of the House of Commons to take into consideration the treatment of criminal and destitute juveniles. The committee sat through two sessions, and in 1853 reported strongly in favour of the reformatory system.

In 1854, an Act was passed authorising judges and magistrates to commit children under sixteen years of age to schools duly licensed by the Secretary of State, for periods varying from two to five years. Power was taken to charge the parents with a weekly contribution, and the Treasury was authorised to pay towards the same.

Before this Act passed, Mr Barwick Baker's school was at work, also Mr Adderley's school at Saltley, Miss Carpenter's and Mr Scot's near Bristol, and Mr Sturges's near Droitwich.

Soon after the passing of the Act, many other schools were started—Devonshire being the first county to move, and Sir Stafford Northcote supplying land and buildings.

Within a mile of Pynes, in the valley of the Exe, there is a rising ground on the verge of a wood. Here, half-way up the hill, stand three or four cottages, surrounded by kitchen-gardens in admirable order, and especially brilliant with hollyhocks and apples in the month of August.

The grounds and other patches near are tilled by boys of polite aspect and kindly manners, who are the inmates of the cottages, and who there learn divers trades and handicrafts under Mr Harris, the master originally appointed in 1855. The schools now contain about thirty boys, who have been rescued from the commencement of careers not creditable to them nor of service to the State. Their living is of the plainest character, their discipline apparently excellent, and it is believed that the comparative decline of crime in Devonshire is due in part to the influence of this reformatory. During Sir Stafford's life the place was always one of his foremost interests. When in the country during his earlier years he attended to every detail: he visited the place regularly, read to the boys, won their confidence, and used to hold a class himself on Sundays. For those who left the school he sought places in the merchant service and elsewhere, and it is impossible to calculate how many lads he won from a miserable and mischievous to a happy and useful life. Of the original establishment of this reformatory, Lady Iddesleigh has kindly written the following brief account, which leaves little to be added—though the letters of 1855, 1856, 1857, are full of references to the institution in its early days of struggle. These struggles were hard, as will be seen. In the high places of philanthropy, Lord Shaftesbury opposed the scheme; the keepers dreaded poaching (for boys will be boys, and all boys of all degrees are poachers); the villagers feared the rise of a kind of Dotheboys Hall, and the farmers trembled for their ricks. Nor were they encouraged by the omen of the names of the first three lads admitted—Messrs Sparks, Gale, and Burns, titles eminently incendiary. What follows is the note by Lady Iddesleigh:—

The Brampford Wood Reformatory was started in April 1855: it was established as nearly as possible on the plan of Mr Barwick Baker's reformatory farm-school in Gloucestershire, which had received much and just commendation for the simplicity and economy of all its arrangements, two cottages thrown into one, and no attempt at expense in building or laying out. Every effort was made by Sir Stafford to keep down all unnecessary

expense of this description. From the position and good water-supply the Brampford Reformatory has always been a remarkably healthy one, and in the early days of its establishment, Sir Stafford was a constant visitor, and superintended all the arrangements. Prejudices of all sorts were raised against it.

To the late Judge Coleridge, father of the Lord Chief-Justice, we find him writing—

"I daresay we are over sanguine as to the amount of good to be done, but I am not disposed to abate my hopes without full trial of a well-arranged school. The conditions are: 1. Youth. 2. Apparent fitness for improvement,—for I don't think regular scamps are the class to be operated on. 3. Strict discipline. 4. A sound practical education of an industrial character. I don't want to teach the 'ologies.

"As to your apologue of John and Dick, I hold that, if you admit for argument's sake that Dick may be converted by means of a reformatory school from a pickpocket to an artisan earning easily £5 a-week, you admit not only a great deal more than we venture to expect, but so much that it amounts to a conclusive argument in our favour. There are many cases in which a rogue has the advantage over an honest man in this life by means of his roguery; but in this case Dick's advantage will be owing, not to his roguery, but to his education. You may say he obtained his education by his roguery in the first instance, but nothing can be easier than to place the same education within the reach of the honest man as well as the rogue. The father of the two lads will have had to pay 5s. a-week (under the Act) for Dick's education, and for a much less sum than that he might have given John an equally good one. Depend upon it, that if the advantages of a sound education come to be so highly prized that parents will bring their children up to crime in order that they may obtain it for them at the high cost of 5s. a-week, they will soon find out a simpler and less objectionable way of arriving at the result. I ventured to remind our audience at Exeter that, though Ho ti found it necessary to burn his house down in order to get roast-pig, less expensive measures were soon invented by his countrymen, and so I hope it will be with us."

Again, in November 1854, in asking the Judge for a small subscription for the reformatory, which he gave, Sir Stafford says: "There are difficulties in the way of raising a large fund at the present time, and on several accounts it is desirable that we should begin with a small establishment, rented premises, and annual subscriptions. Our idea is that £200 a-year will be amply sufficient for our purpose." After some money details, he

adds: "We mean to keep the boys almost wholly to spade industry and other hard out-of-door work. I would give little instruction beyond religious teaching, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and would not allow more than two hours to be spent in that manner. I am anxious that we should have a secluded place, and as little fuss made about the school or its inmates as possible."

There had been some idea of placing the reformatory on Stoke Hill; but the old farmer on whose ground it had been suggested to place it, objected on the ground that all the rabbits and birds in the Stoke Wood covers, of which Lord Iddesleigh rented the shooting from the Church, would be poached by the boys. Some of the villagers believed that the school would become a dreadful place of torture to the criminal boys placed there, and the farmers feared that it would become a hotbed of wickedness to corrupt the neighbourhood. Sir Stafford visited it constantly, and superintended every detail, the food, labour, employments, instruction, rewards, and punishments, and himself gave Scripture instruction every Sunday for years. Mr Bengough spent some weeks at Pynes in the April of 1855 in order to start the school. Mr Bengough was at that time a young man of leisure and some property, who had devoted his energies and money to good works.

By degrees the good done by these reformatory schools conquered the prejudices which even good people entertained against them.

Towards the close of 1855, Lord Iddesleigh met M. de Metz, who had established the famous *colonie agricole* for criminal boys at Mettray; he also was in constant communication with Lord Norton, Mr Barwick Baker, Miss Carpenter, the present Bishop of St Albans (Claughton); and attended meetings at Hams, Hardwicke, Westwood (Sir J. Pakington's), and Birmingham on the subject. Many years later, in 1869, when giving his experience of reformatory management at the inauguration of the training-ship *Formidable* at Bristol, Lord Iddesleigh says: "I suppose the immediate object of this ship is for the benefit of Bristol and the neighbourhood; but some of the boys may be found not suitable for sea service, and I would make the suggestion that you should exchange such boys with me for some whom I could find suitable. I would also give a hint which may seem unnecessary or impertinent, but when you are getting boys out, it is well in the first instance to send them for a long voyage and not on coasting service. The latter is very dangerous for the class with which we have to deal, for if disgusted with the treatment they receive, in some cases hard, they run away and get

into mischief in some seaport town or other. In a long voyage they may at first dislike it, but before they return they steady down and often regain their characters. I recollect the first boy with whom I had to deal was very troublesome, and I was no doubt rather green then. This boy ran away several times, and was so very bad that I bethought me of my friend Mr Barwick Baker, and thinking his experience would enable him to reclaim the lad, I sent him to his reformatory; but he did no better there, and even ran away from him. The question arose, whether we would not let him go, but as a last resource we sent him to the Akbar training-ship at Liverpool. He tried the same game there, and once did get away, but was taken back, and eventually went to sea. Two years afterwards I was in my house in London, when a cab drove to the door, and a fine-looking young sailor got down from the box, and knocking asked to see me. It was my old friend the unmanageable lad, who had returned from China, and had come to report himself to me and show me the money he had got, and he is still doing thoroughly well.

To all his dealings with the difficult question of reformatories, Sir Stafford Northcote brought not only his goodness of heart, but his humour, and his sympathy with the wild and unconsciously humorous tribe of boys. In a letter to Lady Iddesleigh, he mentions that he had "sent his love to Gale" (Gale, of Sparks and Gale, the first comers to the reformatory), "who has made two attempts to run away from his ship." In his 'Quarterly' article (1856), he quotes Mr Symons's remark, that bad boys "are not errant angels, whose reformation requires little else than fondling." He tells a story of some children, pickpockets by calling, like Defoe's 'Colonel Jack,' who escaped from a reformatory school, "intending to maintain themselves as of old, but who were forced to give up the attempt, and surrender to the police, because want of practice had shattered their nerve and made them 'timoursome.' 'And besides, sir,' said the ringleader, 'our fingers was all crooked with work, and we couldn't get them straight to go into the pockets.'" He had found instances, on the Continent, of boys run wild during Napoleon's wars, so wild that (almost after the manner of Romulus and Remus) they "had actually lived amongst and been suckled by Westphalian swine." Without these

adventures he found our own young criminal population animated by "a perversion of taste and a dislike of regularity," which are very natural to the uncivilised human being. The task of reformatories was to counteract that perversion. Sir Stafford Northcote's article remains a most useful summary of the history of the movement.

This chapter may conclude with a recapitulation of Sir Stafford's later action, in 1856, about the cause of industrial training.

A Reformatory Union was projected, the first meeting of which was held at Bristol in August 1856. The object of the union was to collect and diffuse information on the subject of reformatories, and generally to promote their cause and the welfare of those received into them. On one of the evenings of the meeting Sir Stafford Northcote read a paper "On previous Imprisonment for Children sentenced to Reformatories."

To some [he said] it appears that the reformatory school is but the commencement of a wholly new system of penal legislation, that what we are now doing for the child is what we must do for the adult also, and that a period of retributive punishment ought in all cases to be followed by one of reformatory discipline. To others our experiment appears to involve the acknowledgment that retributive punishment ought not to be followed by, but to be altogether set aside in favour of, reformatory discipline; others, again, looking on our schools as places where an excellent moral training is afforded to the criminal, advance a claim on the part of the neglected but innocent part of our youthful population to the same advantages, and argue that the compulsory education which we provide for those who have fallen into open crime ought to be extended at least to those whose parents are either unwilling or unable to bring them up in the right way, and so preserve them from the danger of falling before the temptations which a life of crime presents to the undisciplined and the ignorant.

In these remarks Sir Stafford foreshadowed the industrial schools which have since been established. He then discussed the desirability of inflicting previous imprisonment, his conclusion being that the punishment was right in itself, for if the child had done wrong, suitable

punishment was good for him ; that it was better that the imprisonment should be in a place separate from the reformatory, so that there should be a proper distinction between the place of punishment and that of education ; and that the imprisonment should not be *associated*, so that all good influences should be brought to bear on the child before he began his work. The speaker then reverted to the question of industrial schools "distinct from but giving the same kind of education as the reformatory school, to which vagrant or deserted children might be committed under magisterial authority."

This matter indeed had been in Sir Stafford's mind earlier in the year, when the Reformatory Bill was under discussion (April 8, 1856). He had then written to Miss Carpenter that there was needed an extension of the Scotch Vagrant Act to England, by which magistrates could send vagrants to industrial schools.

By December 1, a bill had been drafted by Sir Stafford providing for the establishment of industrial schools, to which vagrants and truant children might be sent, and for capitation grants being made by the Treasury, as well as for insisting on parents contributing to the expense of their children while removed from their care

This was the bill which Sir Stafford cheerfully called "the 'bus," or the omnibus, because he had taken up in it so many "passengers" in the shape of amendments. He "got it through," as he writes to Lady Northcote, on July 17, 1856. Most of his parliamentary attention was given to this measure in 1856, and to the Civil Service Superannuation Bill. Of his thoughts and actions at this date, his letters from town to Lady Northcote in the country are the most useful record. His bill is "liked on the whole," he writes (April 4), but he "has not heard what the Government thinks of it." Lord John Russell was at this time proposing a series of resolutions in which Sir Stafford was interested, as they tended towards the establishment of a national system of education. About the debate on this matter, Sir Stafford remarks that it "is likely to be a pretty higgledy-piggledy." To Lord John's plan, which provided that the quarter sessions for the

peace of a county, city, or borough should have the power to impose a school rate, Sir Stafford preferred an extension of the actual system then existing. He spoke in this sense on the 11th April; but when he spoke, Lord John had withdrawn all the important parts of his resolutions, and the condition of the legislation described as "higgledy-piggledy" had been evolved.

The time was certainly not favourable for bringing forward any new proposals, and I did not attempt to do it, though I gave notice that I should do so on a future occasion. Lord John, however, has really thrown the question back instead of advancing it, and I believe it would be most imprudent to "try on" anything for the present. I was very well listened to at the beginning of my speech, but could not keep the attention of the House to the end, and cut short a great deal that I wanted to say. In fact, nobody could then have got a hearing except a leading speaker like Gladstone, who made a most admirable speech [April 12]. I hope to get my bill through [he adds, two days later] without opposition, but don't know yet; if it is opposed, I shall probably have to postpone it. I am not at all gloomy as to the prospects of popular education, though all chance of great schemes is at an end.

Their turn came later.

On April 17 he writes, "I got my bill read yesterday for the second time in the neatest way imaginable, without the possibility of a word being said, as there were only five minutes left for business." While Sir Stafford was busy with the cause of reformatory schools in Parliament, the young disciples in his own school were somewhat ungrateful. A number of them ran away early in May, and Sir Stafford writes, "What a bore they are! There is great carelessness in letting such a number go off together. With Mr and Mrs Harris, Parker, Barnes, and Mary Parker—to say nothing of the baby—there ought to be eyes enough to prevent such a thing."

In a much later letter Sir Stafford writes:—

Melville says, and I believe truly, that one great cause of the boys running away is that, having lived in towns and hot rooms, they cannot bear the cold of outdoor country work, and that this, to which they are unaccustomed, makes them also feel short diet.

There is no doubt that the class of town boys, who have been our runaways, are physically as well as morally in an unhealthy state, and cannot bear bracing discipline without flinching from it.

While at Teignmouth, on Yeomanry business, Sir Stafford went to visit a very difficult old pupil, Burns—one of the Gale and Sparks contingent—the veterans of the establishment. Burns was now in service. “He seems very comfortable, and his master and mistress report well of him on the whole, and seem to be kind to him. It is, thus far, a case to be very thankful for. No boy was ever in a more rapid road to ruin.”

The omnibus was piloted through Committee on May 23, 1856 :—

My bill came on about eight o'clock, and went through Committee very swimmingly; indeed the original bill, containing all I cared about, was passed with scarcely a single remark; and the only discussion arose on some clauses that I gave notice of at the request of other people, who were a sort of passengers in my omnibus. One or two of these were withdrawn. Arthur Gordon moved a clause for getting rid of the previous imprisonment, but did not carry it. I voted with him, but was rather glad that he was not successful, as it was more of an organic change than I wanted to see, and I had declined to take him up on the 'bus.

X. congratulated me on my wonderful good luck, and impressed upon me that it was only because five or six of us were acting together that we were able to get on at all or even to make a House; but the truth was, that he was rather sore at having so pertinaciously declined to join me in bringing in the bill, and at having predicted its certain failure. The Government were very friendly. Sir George Grey and Mr Baines took the matter up, and the latter said he thought I had made a most useful improvement in the law, which I was very glad to hear from him, as he really knows and cares more about it than any other member of the Government. Not a word was said about the religious difficulty, and both the Scotch members, and Lord E. Howard and the R.C.'s, were quite satisfied with the solution.

CHAPTER VI.

PARLIAMENTARY WORK.

THE more active part of Sir Stafford Northcote's parliamentary work during 1856 has already been described. He was chiefly busy with his bill about reformatory schools, which, again, led to his bill on industrial schools. As a party man he was able to take no very decided line; and, as Mr Gladstone says in a letter of this year, had chiefly to describe himself by negatives. "Lord Ward and Gladstone think me more of a Derbyite than a Peelite, which is true." He regarded himself as a kind of link between the Derbyites and Peelites, but he had no keen interest, as yet, in the wars of shifting factions. On April 17, 1856, he writes to Lady Northcote: "They say the Queen is not likely to consent to a dissolution, but this is a doubtful speculation. I hope there may be none, for I should like well enough to have another year in Parliament, and I have serious doubts whether I should stand again in case of a dissolution." As it chanced, when a dissolution did come, he stood again, unsuccessfully, leaving the constituency of Dudley for that of North Devon. This change was chiefly due, as will be seen, to two causes. He did not care to represent Lord Ward, which was practically his position; and he did agree with Mr Gladstone that an agricultural constituency best suited his social and political position and attainments. Meanwhile he did not swell the torrent of talk on great occasions. He heard Mr Whiteside, in the Kars debate, attack the Government, and "speak for four hours and a half with the sort of energy that a man sometimes gets up for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, . . . and he never touched as much as a drop of water the whole time. As a piece of acting it was very great. The way in which his voice trembled with suppressed laughter when he read extracts from the Blue-book to show how inadequately the Government provided for great emergencies was very telling, and

some of his bursts of indignation were very fine." Suppressed laughter and bursts of indignation have not yet taught English Governments (1890) to provide for great emergencies. Indeed Sir Stafford himself adds: "Nevertheless the Government will have a large majority, for the security and honour of England are about the last things that large majorities care for." "I shall vote for Whiteside myself," Sir Stafford says; "but a good many of my friends intend either to stay away or to support the Government." "I cannot understand," he remarks, "why it is that there is such general reluctance to vote against the Government in this matter; it seems to me that a clear though not very strong case has been made out against them. I am partly in hopes that Gladstone will speak against them, but I suppose he will not vote."

How sagaciously the Tory battle was fought on Mr Whiteside's motion to censure the Government for neglecting the safety and health of an English army, may be gathered from the following extract of a letter to Lady Northcote:—

It is too long a story to tell you the history of Seymer's amendment, for which 54 of us voted against 453; but it is a curious instance of indecisive manœuvring, and a strong proof of our people's imbecility. The amendment was originally drawn up by Disraeli himself, as long ago as last Friday; and was to have been proposed immediately after Whiteside's speech on the Monday, and all our men would have voted with it, and so probably would the Peelites, and we should have had a close division or perhaps a majority. On Monday morning Lord Derby called us together and told us we were all to vote with Whiteside, and Seymer was told to give up his amendment. On Tuesday evening Lord Malmesbury withdrew his motion (which was the double of Whiteside's) in the House of Lords, on the very grounds stated in Seymer's amendment (the approaching discussion of the treaty of peace), and on the same evening Seymer was desired to move his amendment, which he did, although it was now too late to catch the Peelites. Yesterday, finding the Peelites were not to be caught, and that Seymer's amendment was treated as a sign of weakness, our wise leaders threw him over and resolved for a vote with Whiteside; but even then

they would not stop the amendment being moved, and no one knew to the last whether they wished us to vote for it or against it. It was as nice a hash as you can imagine. Of the 54 who voted with Seymour, 25 left the House without voting at all on the main question, 18 voted with Whiteside, and 11 voted with the Government.

Disraeli made a really good speech, which he does not often do. Layard was well and deservedly peppered by Bulwer, Graham, Disraeli, and Whiteside. . . . Bulwer's speech, except as to Layard, was frothy in the extreme. Graham's was good, and damaging to the Government, though he voted with them. Palmerston also was pretty good. He was in high spirits of course.

J. was horribly disgusted, and gave formal notice that he should no longer attend meetings of the party or answer their circulars. I confess that (trimmer as Henta. calls me) I am rather too much of a partisan to give up so easily; and I am secretly not much displeased at the turn things are taking. I have been acting as a sort of go-between to the Peelites and our own side, and I am sure there is an excellent feeling springing up between us. At the same time, this large majority disposes of the idea of a dissolution for the present, and unless some unexpected turn is taken, we shall go on quietly for the rest of the session.

On June 9, Sir Stafford came up from the country in time to vote "against the Jew Bill." Many of his friends, who had come up by the same train, but did not expect a division till night, were unable to oppose the scheme. "We were beaten of course," says Sir Stafford, probably without much regret. Another political struggle in which the Peelites were expected to aid the Derbyites to discomfit Lord Palmerston's Government, is thus described:—

Moreover, the time is an interesting one, and I don't like being out of the way without necessity, as there is no saying what may turn up. The Peelites feel very strongly on the American question, and there is, I fancy, complete harmony between them and the leaders of the Opposition on the subject. Mr Baillie has been in communication with Gladstone, and has entirely altered his motion for Thursday—in fact, it now looks to me as if Gladstone had drawn it up for him. It is very skilfully worded, and I do not see how the Government are to resist it. In the meantime

Lord John, with his usual dodginess, is going to make some kind of move on Monday, thus cutting in before Baillie; but whether it is to be a move to help the Government, or to damage them, no mortal can say. I don't venture to speculate upon what may turn up; and there is always Lord Palmerston's wonderful luck to be taken into account, as well as the certainty that if our stupid people can by any ingenuity make a blunder, they will manage to do it.

Sir Stafford says:—

I confess I am not very anxious for a change of Ministry if they can get well out of this difficulty [with America, about recruiting], and escape a war; but the Peelites are very anxious to have the attempt made. Meanwhile the reconstruction of the Conservative party goes on at about the pace of the Tertiary formation.

The session of 1856 ended, and Sir Stafford was occupied a good deal with conferences on the reformatory schemes at Bristol, where Miss Mary Carpenter was in her native element. But those duties and the pleasures of the country did not prevent him from considering seriously his own rather isolated political position. He consulted Mr Gladstone, who answered in a letter of October 9, 1856—a letter which, perhaps, contained no very positive advice. That kind of counsel is at all times difficult to impart—*candidus imperti*, people say, and do not always care to act on the candid advice when they have received it. "As a delicate and scrupulous conscience has led you to seek for aid," says Mr Gladstone, "I sincerely wish that I could render it in full. I will cheerfully do the little I can, but it is very little." The condition of public affairs, as Mr Gladstone remarked, "was anomalous and disjointed." Sir Stafford had first to reckon in his inner *forum* with Lord Ward, who was practically his constituency. Mr Gladstone kindly undertook to make known to Lord Ward Sir Stafford's doubts and scruples. He conceived that Sir Stafford should attempt to secure a county seat. "Your natural place, I think, will ultimately be found in the agricultural part of the representation." Of course if he sought a county seat,

Sir Stafford's difficulties about Lord Ward would be ended in the proverbial way—*solvitur ambulando*, by walking off from Dudley. As to the general question, Mr Gladstone thought that independent men, acting under independent heads, might preserve "the old stable elements of the House of Commons." "Of one thing I feel quite sure: the *worst* solution of your difficulties would be the one that perhaps you feel the least burdensome—I mean your quitting Parliament altogether."

Early in 1857, Sir Stafford Northcote wrote (January 30) that there was a rumour of his intention to stand for North Devon, but that he thought his standing highly improbable. But the improbable was exactly what occurred. Sir Stafford had foreseen (what seems odd to think of now) a coalition between Mr Gladstone and Mr Disraeli as "a contingency by no means impossible, but very unpleasant to contemplate." Mr Gladstone was at the time "very angry with Lord Palmerston, and says his principal political object now is to turn out the Government. We are pretty sure to have some fun before long; I only trust it may not lead to a dissolution," which was not long delayed. The Budget was the question on which Mr Gladstone expected to beat the Government; and Sir Stafford writes that he himself has consulted the card-oracle, and demonstrated "by two brilliant Patiences" the correctness of Mr Gladstone's forecast. But the cards and Mr Gladstone were mistaken. Lord Palmerston had a majority, "and I think he is set on his legs for a good while." But the end was coming. On February 27, Sir Stafford writes "that the Chinese case is a very bad one"—the "case" being our attack on Canton in reprisals for the Chinese behaviour to the celebrated lorcha Arrow. "There has seldom been," says Mr McCarthy in his 'History of our Own Times,' "so flagrant and so inexcusable an example of high-handed lawlessness in the dealings of a strong with a weak people." Sir Stafford writes (February 28): "The case is a very bad one to appeal to the country upon, for nothing could be more monstrous than Sir J. Bowring's conduct and the Government approval of it. The British

flag is rather too sacred an ensign to be made the cover of pirates and smugglers, and the instrument of wholesale murder, for the sake of gratifying Sir John Bowring's vanity, as it has lately been." He adds that "people are said to be getting uneasy about Mr Gladstone's health, think he is over-exciting himself, and will break down like Bright."

The Government was beaten on the Chinese question on March 3. And here occurred a test of the relations between Sir Stafford and Lord Ward. He writes:—

You will see that the Government were beaten last night. I, of course, voted against them. But while they were in the last agonies, and every vote seemed of vital consequence, I received a message, through one of their Whips, that Lord Ward wanted to see me. He told me that he had voted for the Government; that they had strongly pressed upon him the inconsistency of his supporting me against them; that my doing so in fact neutralised his political influence; and that, in short, he should take it as a great favour if I would leave the House without voting. If I decided that I could not do so, he said I must not be surprised that we should henceforth be less united than we had been. I had a little time to reflect, and I talked the matter over with Gladstone and Heathcote: they both took the same view as I did, that it was impossible for me at the last moment, after having fully made up my mind on the merits of the question, and let my opinion be known, to withdraw to please Lord Ward. Had I done so, I should have accepted the position of a mere tool, which would not suit me. I wrote to Lord Ward, telling him I could not do otherwise than vote, and that I felt that my connection with Dudley must terminate; that I recognised the awkwardness of his position, and would do whatever was most agreeable to him as regarded resigning, either immediately or at a general election. I have not heard from him yet, indeed I could not; but whatever he may wish, it will be impossible for me to stand again for Dudley. If there is no dissolution, I should like to stay in for the rest of this session and carry my bill; but probably there will be no such alternative. As to standing anywhere else, I can as yet form no decision; but I think, in the circumstances of our family and fortune, I must give up the idea. It will be no great loss to me, and I shall be quite content to subside into private life. However, it is a little premature to talk of these matters.

On the whole, though Lord Ward was still ready to

support Sir Stafford at Dudley, Mr Gladstone advised him to stand for North Devon. Yet the advice was contingent on success in North Devon being tolerably certain. Finally, Sir Stafford determined that the Devonshire constituency would suit him best: he stood for it, and was defeated after a very expensive contest.

For more than a year after the North Devon election, Sir Stafford Northcote was absent from Parliament. The expenses of his candidature had been large, and, for purposes of economy, he and his family made France, as he says, their "adopted country." Several visits to England were made by Sir Stafford; and on June 30, 1858, he writes to Lady Northcote: "I have had a curious sort of letter from Earle, saying Disraeli wishes to see me as soon as he can, and he hopes I shall suspend any decision till I have heard from himself the 'offer' which he has to make to me." It turned out that Mr Disraeli was to propose a seat for Stamford, and possibly a secretaryship of the Treasury to Sir Stafford. On this supposition, Sir Stafford writes an interesting letter to Lady Northcote, showing how his acceptance of the offer would affect his relations with Mr Disraeli and with Mr Gladstone:—

I have seen Earle this morning, and am to see Disraeli at a quarter past five. If I have time, I will write you a line with the result of the interview. Stamford is the seat he means; and he thinks it possible he will offer the Secretaryship of the Treasury also. I shall certainly not accept the seat without the office. It would put us to all the inconveniences of parliamentary life, separation and expense, with nothing in return; and I should also mark myself as Dizzy's man, and hold an uncomfortable dependent position in the House and lower myself out of it. But if he offers the office at the same time, the case will be very much altered, and I should only feel one difficulty in accepting the proposal, which is, that I fear it would be disagreeable to Gladstone. I would much rather give up all thoughts of Parliament and office than do anything that would give him the impression that I was deserting him. I mean to try and see him or Mrs Gladstone before seeing Disraeli, and to find out how he would look on the matter. I should not myself consider that I was deserting him; because I have never followed him, and never mean to follow him in an anti-Conservative direction, and I have

always desired, and still desire, that he should join the Government; and moreover, I should take care to let Disraeli know, if I do accept, that I shall never act against Gladstone in a personal question, should such arise. But my position with regard to Gladstone is a very awkward one; and I am afraid, if I take office, two things will be said, which might equally annoy him—one, that my doing so showed that he was favourable to the Government; the other, that it showed that I had deserted him for Dizzy. I don't fear any bad consequences to myself from joining on Dizzy's invitation. I should be abused a little, but that I don't care for; and I should always hold myself free to take an independent line if necessary.

It was not likely that Mr Gladstone would discourage a young, able, and ambitious member of Parliament from joining a Government to which he occasionally lent his own independent support, and on July 6 Sir Stafford writes, "Three cheers for Dizzy!" He had agreed to stand for Stamford, and was to have the Secretaryship to the Treasury if Mr Hamilton gave it up, or, failing that, was probably to have a place at the India Board. His first impressions of Mr Disraeli are amusing enough: "Dizzy talked as if he had always had my interests in the very centre of his heart," whereas, if one may say so, Mr Disraeli had previously dissembled his love. The acquaintance between two men destined to be companions for life had been of the slightest. Sir Stafford goes on:—

I only look upon my obligation to him as binding me to be personally civil to him, and not as committing me to him in the event of any great break-up. I have no doubt his object is to strengthen himself in the House by getting in men who will rather look up to and follow him, and who can make themselves useful in office on a pinch. After all, as he said to me, there is no gambling like politics. Isn't that a characteristic speech for him? But certainly when one looks to these sudden turns of luck one feels it to be true.

"I feel as if I were reading a novel about myself," Sir Stafford adds, "the whole thing is so queer." "Nothing could be tamer," he said, than the proceedings at his election. The immovable audience made him more nervous than "a good big crowd with cabbage-stalks and howls."

He was quite devoid of physical nervousness. "A broken head is nothing to speak of," he remarked once, replying to the letter of a young lady who condoled with him on an accident. However, he was elected, if without the agreeable excitement of cabbage-stalks, and at once took his seat in the House of Commons.

Early in 1859, Sir Stafford Northcote was appointed Financial Secretary to the Treasury. "You will have seen my appointment announced in yesterday's 'Times,'" he writes on January 12, "which took us all by surprise when we took up the paper in the train. I have just seen Disraeli. . . . Dizzy says he looks upon the position of the Government as difficult, but not dangerous." Referring to a criticism of himself in the 'Times,' he adds: "Isn't the 'Times' of to-day rich? I don't see my own sentimentality as strongly as they do." The comments of the press in general he found rather amusing. The 'Spectator' was "rather patronising." He soon began to be "less afraid of breaking down" under his new duties. "I expect that my relations with Disraeli will be very agreeable. He consults me upon a variety of matters connected with general politics, as well as upon strictly departmental business, and there is a great deal of the latter kind of work coming on which will be left pretty much in my hands."

At this time Mr Disraeli was in labour with that famed and ill-fated Reform Bill of the "lateral extension" and the "fancy qualifications." Of course the arrangement had no sincerity nor life. Were the working classes to be enfranchised? Was the constitution to become what it *has* become? Mr Disraeli knew that those things were written in the Sibyl's books, and wished, so to speak, to buy one small pamphlet, cheap, from that early publisher, the Sibyl. But his party would endure but a very small pamphlet; the Radicals, led by Mr Bright, were demanding a folio, and so that shifty and unsuccessful compromise was attempted, and failed. Sir Stafford wrote (Feb. 5), for Mr Disraeli, a long and closely reasoned note on the question, advocating a moderate measure of Reform, extension and amendment of the

franchise, without redistribution. This "would not be absurd, coming from professed Conservatives." The document is too long to quote, nor did its mild wisdom save Mr Disraeli.

Mr Disraeli was defeated by a majority of thirty-nine. There was a dissolution, and a vote of want of confidence after the general election turned Lord Derby's party out. Lord Palmerston came in, with Mr Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Sir Stafford, never again to be found in the same political camp as his former chief, sat on the Opposition benches.

All times almost are stormy. Those days were full of fears of war. England distrusted Napoleon: he had gone to war "for an idea," and had made peace for a province. He had vanquished Austria and taken Savoy. Whom would he attack next, and what would he next annex? We are the Power most obnoxious to the assaults of ambition, for we have most to lose and least force to defend what we possess. Moreover, each party in turn is apt to be assailed by the other for incurring expenses that are onerous, but absolutely necessary, if we are not to live at the mercy of chance and France. From a letter of Sir Stafford's to Mr Disraeli, written shortly before they left office (May 5, 1859), we extract just enough to show how English Ministers are placed in this matter of national security and national expenditure, thanks to the system of party government, as it is often worked under our constitution:—

The real question therefore, for you to consider, is one of policy.

It is, of course, essential to put the defences of the country in such a state that we may be able to resist an attack at any time at which it is likely to be made upon us.

It is almost equally important to husband our resources by not incurring any expenditure prematurely and unnecessarily. It is within the power of any one to form a judgment as to the importance of undertaking these works of defence which will be of permanent utility, and which cannot be executed in a hurry; but it is only the Cabinet that can judge whether the circumstances of the time are such as to require the immediate expenditure involved in keeping on foot a large number of soldiers,

and in taking steps for the preparation of a siege-train and other means of offence.

The Supplementary War Estimates include a sum of £420,000 for the maintenance under arms of a considerable number of militia, whom it was previously intended to disembody as soon as the Indian troops arrived. Now, if immediate hostilities are apprehended, nothing can be more proper than to keep these men together. But if that is not the case, it becomes a question whether there is a necessity for this expenditure. It is not like spending that sum on building ships or fortifications, which if not wanted this year may be wanted next, and which are something to show for your money.

If you keep these men embodied for a twelvemonth, and do not require their services, it is so much money lost. Again, if you put off your ships and your fortifications, thinking they will not be wanted just yet, and a sudden emergency arises, you cannot supply them in a moment, and the consequences of delaying the expenditure are serious; but if you disembody your militia, and then find matters assuming a threatening aspect, you can, if you please, call them together in a very few weeks, and they will be *almost* as efficient as if you had kept them embodied.

I am quite aware that to disembody militia at this time would raise some comment. But if it is the policy of the Government to make a display of neutrality, and to convince the people of this country that there is no intention to plunge them into a war, it might be well to have the disembodiment of the militia to set against the increase of the navy, the preparation of warlike stores, and the encouragement of Volunteers.

I do not know that there is any use in my adding anything as to the Budget. There can be no doubt of our being able to raise the largest sum which has yet been suggested as likely to be needed for our expenditure; and the country will back you up if you show that what you ask is really wanted. Probably, therefore, it is best absolutely to settle how much you want before considering the way of raising it.

"The country will back you up if you show that what you ask is really wanted." Perhaps; but the Opposition is always ready to show that nothing is really wanted. These gloomy reflections are habitual and familiar. But Sir Stafford (May 6, 1859) "found Dizzy in capital spirits; but with a deficit of £4,000,000 staring us in the face. I don't feel as jolly as he does, nor can I take his sanguine view of our parliamentary prospects."

The sanguine views were not accurate, and Lord Palmerston came in with a strong Government. The French Emperor at that time caused much anxiety, men thinking—

“ We have a very great ally,
But only the devil knows what he means.”

European affairs were left unsettled by the Peace of Villafranca; in America the first murmurs of the Secession were audible; at home the Volunteers were replying to the Laureate's invitation to “Form”; meanwhile the Government promised to remodel the Customs, to repeal the Paper Duty, and to bring in a Reform Bill.

Among Sir Stafford's correspondence at this time one finds nothing more notable than the following line from Mr Gladstone (July 25):—

I endeavoured to arrest your progress by a prolonged shaking of the head [Sir Stafford had been speaking on finance in the House], which you probably took for a mere denial of the fact, but which was intended to intimate that references from the Opposition bench to opinions of the permanent officers of Government, in contradiction to the opinion of the Minister who is responsible in the matter at issue, were contrary to rule and to convenience.

Did Lord Burleigh ever say so much in one nod?

In the recess, Sir Stafford visited Lord Derby at Knowsley. About one interesting member of the party there he writes to Lady Northcote:—

Mrs Disraeli is great fun, and we made capital friends in the train, though I could not help occasionally pitying her husband for the startling effect her natural speeches must have upon the ears of his great friends. Still there is something very warm and good in her manner, which makes one forgive a few oddities. She informed me she was born in Brampford Speke, and I told her they must come and see her birthplace some time when they are in Devonshire. What do you say to the idea of asking them to Pynes? It would complete the astonishment of our neighbours.

When business began again, we find him giving to Mr Disraeli the following account of the “situation”:—

From what I gather, the Russell section in the Cabinet have triumphed, and we are to have £10 for counties, £6 rental for boroughs, but very little disfranchisement, and I suppose no

ballot. There seems to be a good deal of doubt whether the £6 will go down, and a general expectation among our friends that we shall make a stand either for £8, or for a rating franchise. I hope it may be for the latter. No doubt it will lead to inequalities; but they are such as will correct themselves, and the operation of the measure would be to produce a fairer system of rating throughout the country. It is, indeed, a critical time for us in every way; and there will be a great need of sagacity in laying down the line of policy for the Conservatives, and of firmness in adhering to it. There is an apparent vacillation in Napoleon's proceedings, which is very unsatisfactory, and renders it difficult to steer between the risks of quarrelling with him and of being led by him into most embarrassing relations with other States. Is he really as strong as he seems? and is he pursuing a determined policy, or fishing for one from day to day? I own to having great doubts about him, and to being very desirous to give him as wide a berth as possible. I don't see how he is to get handsomely out of his Roman difficulty. If the Pope is resolved to stand firm and to oppose a passive resistance to the secession of his States, I fancy he will cause the Emperor as much trouble as somebody or something is causing him with respect to his free-trade measures, and that we shall see postponements to July 1861, and protective duties, and consultations with eminent manufacturers imported into foreign policy. It looks as if the Emperor, after playing a game to make France paramount in Europe, ran some considerable risk of isolating her. If it is true that Austria and Russia are drawing together against him, and if Prussia looks on him, as I suppose she does, with jealous suspicion, the English alliance is his only hope, and this sudden tacking in our direction looks as if he thought so too. Then are we two to fight it out against the rest? Or if not, is the Emperor to be made to "eat dirt," and to treasure up wrath against England for letting it be so? Are we to encourage him to a certain point, and then to leave him in the lurch; or are we to go on so far as to find ourselves in another Crimean war of more formidable dimensions?

I don't like the look of it at all.

"The look of it" was certainly not agreeable.

The tasks undertaken by Lord Palmerston's Government were not inconsiderable. They included "a remodelling of the Customs system, a repeal of the Paper Duties, and a Reform Bill."¹ Sir Stafford Northcote had

¹ M'Carthy, iii. 95.

become a member of the regular Opposition, and had now to learn the lesson which perhaps he never acquired very perfectly, that the first business of an Opposition is to oppose. As to the Commercial Treaty with France, Sir Stafford spoke his mind in the House of Commons on February 21, 1860. At that time many traders expected, from the example of the French Treaty, an era of general and profitable free trade. But in France free trade was initiated at the expense of freedom. The French did not want it, the will of the Emperor imposed it; it could not flourish. The bill, as a whole, had his approval; his criticism was expended on certain details, and on the management of taxation by which the treaty was to be set in motion. He "could not help remembering that even gold might be bought too dear," much more then light wine which claimed descent from the vineyards of the Garonne, but of which we may even perhaps say—

"It didna grow on ony brae,
Nor yet in ony sheugh."

We were possibly paying too dear for cheap claret, and we were imitating the Methuen Treaty, the horror of economists, when we let French wine in at 1s. and clapped eighteenpence on the sherry of Spain and the port of Lusitania. "On the whole, however, though the treaty did not give us all we wished, and all we had a right to expect, and although it contained a condition which would be embarrassing to us, he was free to admit that it made a breach in the French system of prohibition which might be attended with most important consequences. If, then, he felt obliged to oppose the whole scheme, it was not because he undervalued the advantages of it, but that he objected to the price we were called upon to pay for it."

Then a touch of literary criticism came in: a member had spoken of Mr Gladstone's "simple eloquence." Now, said Sir Stafford, "the eloquence of the right hon. gentleman nobody ever doubted, but that its characteristic was *simplicity*, he was hardly prepared to admit." The eloquence, in fact, simplified matters, he thought, by a course of economy or suppression. If Mr Gladstone was right in

his calculations, we were paying, not a penny (on the income-tax), but a more considerable sum—threepence. It was proposed to abolish the paper tax—and he was not defending the paper duty,—but, with that abolished and Customs reduced, where was the money to come from? The more light claret we drank, the less malt and hops would aid the financier. Was it proposed to diminish the expenditure on national defence, and that in perilous times? No doubt Mr Bright would “be delighted” by that expedient, and a reformed House of Commons, elected under his “exciting eloquence,” would be delighted too, and would enjoy taxing property. “They were running the risk of a reckless onslaught on the national establishments, by which the country might be exposed to great dangers, and thus a measure of economy might ultimately prove a measure of great extravagance; or they ran the risk of having a tax laid exclusively on realised property, from which the capital of the rich traders and manufacturers, who reaped the most advantage from free trade, would be specially exempted.” On the whole, the treaty, though in many ways a good treaty, was “exposing the country to serious risks.” Another objection to the treaty taken by Sir Stafford (March 8, 1860), aimed at a clause which provided for export of coal to France (clearly for the use of the French navy), free of duty. “We had been, he would not say entrapped, but induced by France to accept this clause for her own particular objects.” Corks, as well as coal, attracted his attention. Mr Gladstone, for whom he “really blushed,” had proposed a differential duty in favour of French corks. Where was free trade?

In Sir Stafford’s ‘Twenty Years of Financial Policy’ (p. 357), he remarks that “the actual result of the year was even more unfavourable than Mr Gladstone had anticipated.” The deficiency, instead of being £1,280,000, proved to be £2,558,385, or, in round figures, £2,550,000. The satisfaction of having prophesied not incorrectly may therefore have cheered Sir Stafford.

On May 8, Sir Stafford moved an amendment to Mr Gladstone’s motion on the Paper Duties, that “the present

state of the finances of the country renders it undesirable to proceed further with the repeal of the Excise duty on paper." In speaking to this amendment, Sir Stafford Northcote did not discuss the general subject. He treated the bill in its financial aspect, and here even his opponents would probably admit that he was right. He wanted the Estimates to be fully discussed before the measure. "The Budget was announced before a single estimate was produced." "For his own part," he says, "I do not intend to maintain that the paper duty is a good duty, nor do I in any way dispute the case which my right hon. friend (Mr Gladstone) has made against it." In short, Sir Stafford was not—he never was—a sound obscurantist Tory. No doubt he foresaw, as clearly as any man then foresaw, as clearly as any man sees now, the consequences that a cheap press must bring; but he also saw the inevitable arguments which inflict themselves on statesmen in a free country. He fell back on a conscientious argument for delay.

We are now sacrificing a large and important portion of indirect taxation [about a million], without having previously settled the principles upon which the direct taxation to be substituted is to be placed. I do not wish to be understood as saying that I object to the substitution in a proper way of direct for indirect taxation. What I mean is this, that we ought to take very good care to make direct taxation as free as possible from objection, and to put it in such a shape that when we strike away indirect taxation, we may be in a position to fall back on direct taxation, with the certainty that it will not fail us in consequence of the objections which it will engender. This is the point in which the scheme of the Government fails. Is it prudent to strike away indirect taxation, when we have in its place only the income-tax, which high authorities tell us is unsuitable as a permanent source of revenue, and when no one can assure us that it can in any way be altered or improved?

A deficit would be accumulated for next year. Then, going into figures, Sir Stafford alleged that half the estimated surplus had vanished.

He asked the House not to condemn the principle of the bill; but, in face of the financial condition of affairs,

to refuse its assent to the bill for the present. He declined, again and again, to discuss the merits of the bill. His argument was purely and soberly financial. It did not call for eloquence: the other side had adequate opportunities for eloquence, "simple" or subtle.

The argument, clear, plain, and practically unanswerable financially, had its effect. The second reading of the bill had been carried by 53. On May 9, the third reading was only carried by a majority of 9, the Opposition having an access of 18 votes, while the Government had lost 26.

The bill was ultimately thrown out by the House of Lords.

Writing to Lady Northcote after the withdrawal of the abortive Reform Bill, which the Government had introduced in the course of the session, Sir Stafford says, "The Reform Bill was withdrawn last night in solemn silence. I don't much expect another." Sir Stafford adds: "It is difficult to believe in Gladstone's assenting to the large expense which is to be incurred for fortifications and the Chinese war, and I shall not be in the least surprised if he and Milner Gibson go out."

The session ended, and both politicians remained in.

At the end of the session, Sir Stafford went cruising in a yacht, the *Czarina* (Sir George Stucley), and "enjoyed the life beyond measure, not being in the least sick." "One can do with much less room than one thought possible, and I am satisfied that Cardinal Balue must have been very comfortable.¹ Artificial milk is not a bit better than natural milk, if so good. There are people capable of putting to sea for many days, without a pack of *Patience* cards, box of letters, chess-board, or solitaire."

Sir Stafford's was one of those active minds which, in repose, are active still, and disport themselves in sports which people who are active too, but in a different way, find laborious. *Patience* was always a joy of his,—by this art he discovered that "the Prince Imperial will come to the throne of France,"—and the spelling

¹ Students whose historical tastes have led them to see M. Coquelin in "Gringoire," or who have read 'Quentin Durward,' will remember how pleased Louis XI. is, at shutting up Cardinal Balue in an iron cage.

game was a treasure of entertainment. The Czarina pottered happily about the lazy Scheldt and the Dutch coast, while her passengers "found their chief resource in singing nigger melodies," with an occasional chorus of sailors, to the surprise of the neighbouring mariners. *Vogue la galère!* income-taxes and paper duties ceased to trouble for a season. Ghent and Antwerp were visited, but the weather prevented a trip to Waterloo. "So the summer ended," as Thucydides says, and winter drew on, with Christmas festivities at Pynes.

The session of 1861 promised to present Lord Palmerston's Government with financial troubles. "There will be in any case plenty of difficulty with the finances this year," Sir Stafford wrote to Mr Disraeli (January 19, 1861), "and if Bright is as keen about the repeal of the paper duty as he is reported to be, the Government will find themselves in trouble." As to the paper duty, he stated his belief in a paper, showing why, the House having upheld the principles of the Budget, "we ought not to oppose the repeal of the paper duty as a separate measure" (March 10, 1861); "we shall irritate the opponents of direct taxation by taking our stand on an unpopular tax, and one which cannot, in the nature of things, be long maintained." He was disposed "to make a general protest against the improvidence of the whole Budget, but to leave the responsibility of its details to the Government." He worked out, for Mr Disraeli, "a bit of prospective finance," anticipating deficiency.

On April 19 he writes to Lady Northcote:—

Our little Budget storm is brewing in a promising manner, and, I think, will be a serious one by this day week. Disraeli is in the highest spirits because the battle is to be fought by tactics and not by brute force, and he thinks he is going to display great powers of generalship. I am always a little afraid of his manœuvring, especially when he has a good game, because he always spoils it by overdoing something or other. However, I so far sympathise with him as to feel as if I had just settled down to an interesting novel (not the 'Heir of Redclyffe'), and knew that I had a treat in store, and was wondering what the *dénouement* would be.

In his speech on Ways and Means (April 22), Sir Stafford had the opportunity of showing that his predictions of deficiency uttered in 1860 were not incorrect. "The calculations made on the Opposition side of the House had been justified almost to the letter. They had said that the provision made by the financial arrangements of last year was insufficient, and it had not proved sufficient." However, he congratulated Mr Gladstone on the results of the French Treaty. On the whole, the hand-to-mouth system of taxation was what he chiefly objected to. "He held that they ought to maintain their revenue and expenditure on as equal a footing as possible, and reserve those taxes which were their only resort in time of need till their necessities compelled them to fall back on them." Mr Gladstone, defending his surplus, denounced the prophets of evil. Sir Stafford interrupted, "There is a deficiency now of £8,500,000;" to which Mr Gladstone replied, "My honourable friend should not play on words." Indeed, for that time, the debate was rather personal. Mr Gladstone somewhat disdained "the honourable member for Stamford," and "flew at still higher game," "the great authorities of the party,"—Lord Monteagle ("A ridiculous point," said Mr Disraeli later) and Lord Derby. The expected deficiency would only be a deficiency if the income-tax were not renewed. Sir Stafford had written (April 29) to Mr Disraeli: "I am horribly afraid of moving an amendment in the resolution itself. Gladstone may bring up an array of figures to show that we shall upset the finance of the country, and may carry off a number of votes."

The great dispute was between the claims of sugar and tea on one hand, and of paper on the other, to be free from duty. Mr Horsfall moved the amendment in favour of tea and sugar. Sir Stafford (May 2) still disbelieved in Mr Gladstone's argument for the existence of a surplus. His whole argument may be briefly stated, as it was by this effort that Sir Stafford made his first deep impression on the House, and justified the confidence and the applause of his party leaders. He denied the existence of the surplus, he denied that his denial was a "playing

upon words," he asserted that there did not exist any surplus, but that a surplus had to be made. The question was not, "Which of two taxes" (paper or sugar and tea) "will you remit?" but, Will you put on one tax that you may remit another. Twopence was practically being added to the duty legally leviable on tea, "and this, not to cover the necessary demands of the year, but to make up an excess over these demands, in order that a certain other duty" (on paper) "might be taken off." He argued on grounds (1) of general policy; (2) of good faith—including the question as to the honour of the House in relation to the House of Lords, which had thrown out the bill remitting the paper tax; and last, he touched the financial grounds of the proposal.

First, the reduction in Customs duties, Mr Gladstone's object, was countered by the ideas of Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert wished, in 1845, when he had a surplus, to reduce taxation on articles of general consumption. Tea and sugar were among these: Mr Gladstone was postponing their deliverance to that of paper. Again, Mr Gladstone had argued that, not the English tea-drinker but the foreign, the Chinese tea-producer, would benefit by Mr Horsfall's amendment, or at least, that the Chinese would benefit first. That sounded like protectionist heresy in a free-trade mouth, "It sounded very strangely when it came from his right honourable friend." "He surely did not need to remind his right honourable friend, . . . that our exports depended on our imports." The more tea we drank, the more our cottons, calicoes, razors, and so on, would be in demand. They were thus defending the general interests of the country, not the narrow and limited interests of the English tea-drinker. "They were bound to consider whether, in benefiting trade and manufactures, they were also conferring a real and general benefit on the consumer of the necessaries of life." It was the turn of the working classes rather than of the manufacturer. But, of the two, the manufacturer would benefit by taxing tea rather than paper. The working classes were practically unrepresented; as the Reform Bill had failed,

"they were excluded from the suffrage. . . . The working classes could only petition, and when they did so, they were told that their petitions were forged." Whether these arguments were intended as steps to a Tory Reform Bill does not appear; but they certainly sounded rather strange in the mouth of a Conservative orator. Mr Gladstone had argued that the middleman, the trader, would intercept all the benefit from a lower duty on tea and sugar, but Sir Stafford found an "antiquated protectionism" in Mr Gladstone's opinion. As an argument *ad hominem*, Sir Stafford had perhaps rather the better of it, by quoting Mr Gladstone's speech of March 6, 1854.

Turning to "good faith," Sir Stafford maintained that the House was pledged to the working classes to reduce the tea and sugar duties, "at the earliest opportunity after the close of the war"—the Crimean war. That was a pledge prior to the pledge about paper. But was the honour of the House of Commons not more deeply pledged—to resist the House of Lords? *His* idea of honour was "the perfection of justice." The honour of his opponents was "the honour of the duellist, and not true honour." "The House of Lords had rejected the repeal of the paper duty last year, not on account of any love which they had for that duty beyond any other duty, but because they thought that sufficient provision had not been made for the wants of the financial year." "It was a severe rebuke, and a very just rebuke," to the Government. He could have understood the Government sending back the bill again and again to the House of Lords, but he could not understand the present petty course. He praised "the wise and magnanimous conduct of the House of Lords," and then there was a tumult of howls and cheers. But he reasserted that the Government's policy was one of "petty pique."

He now came to "the narrower but perhaps even more important question of finance." He utterly denied that, in the true sense, any surplus existed. Omitting here other details of figures, he made the remark that, as to the payment of a million of Exchequer bonds falling due, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer had simply given the

House to understand that he did not mean to condescend to the baseness of repayment." But, after Mr Gladstone's solemn adherence to his creed in the existence of a surplus, it would be "improper and even indecent" for the Opposition to deny this entity. Well, granting the surplus, what duties ought to be remitted? Those on tea, not those on paper. He had to accept, but could not understand Mr Gladstone's statement, that Mr Horsfall's amendment would involve a loss of £950,000 on the revenue. Here the "array of figures" can hardly be followed in a brief abstract; but "if trade would be paralysed because there was going to be a fall in duty," that misfortune would arrive, whether the fall was on tea or on paper. The difficulty was to prevent the middleman from getting the benefit, if they reduced by dribblets; the producer, if they reduced by a large amount, and stimulated demand beyond supply. But there was any amount of tea to be had. The Chinese markets had just been opened: the condition of the United States (the Rebellion, or Civil War, having commenced) was hostile to *their* demand for tea. He did not, he never did, defend the paper duties in themselves. "They had an ingenious Chancellor of the Exchequer, fertile in expedients; if he longed to slay that giant, the paper duty, let him choose some other weapon from his armoury for slaying it, rather than the war tax on tea. The poor were now appealing to them for relief." (Oh! oh!) He ended by repeating (again in face of cries of "Oh! oh!") that he "did *not* love the paper duties."

The speech was very successful: unusually successful, —the real beginning of the speaker's parliamentary career and of his importance in politics. Mr Disraeli said: "Never since I have had the honour of a seat in this House have I heard a question more completely or more fairly put before the House, supported by ampler knowledge, illustrated in a happier manner, and recommended for our consideration by reasoning more irresistible." Lord Palmerston said that Sir Stafford "had spoken with great ability, and in great detail." But when the question was put "that the word 'tea' stand part of the proposed resolu-

tion," the Government had a majority of 18, "a very small majority, as it is in its 'teens' it can hardly be called a majority at all," said Mr Disraeli, with a characteristic *calembour*.

Lord Derby wrote to congratulate Sir Stafford on his "powerful and brilliant speech," and "the readiness with which he replied to and destroyed the fallacies" of Mr Gladstone. "Stanley told me this morning that by your speech last night you had placed yourself in a position among our friends in the House of Commons second only to that of Mr Disraeli." Mrs Disraeli, in writing to Lady Northcote, said that Mr Disraeli considered the speech "one of the finest he had ever heard." Lord Stanley, in a letter of May 3, called it "the most complete parliamentary success that I have heard in the twelve years I have sat in the House. You are marked out for a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The comment I heard from a competent judge was, 'It is Gladstone at his best, without Gladstone's temper.'" There was much happiness when all these messages of praise and thanks came in. Lady Idlesleigh remembers the morning as "perhaps the happiest in her life." The 'Times' reporter, sending down from the gallery to ask for notes, rather unconventionally directed his message to "The Orator of the Opposition bench." Some one made the neat quotation, with regard to Mr Gladstone—

"Keen are his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel."

But, in spite of tradition, Mr Gladstone had not done very much for "the pinion." It had written his official letters for a short time. Sir Stafford was his secretary, not his pupil.

Among other results of this speech was probably Sir Stafford's book on 'Twenty Years of Financial Policy.' Writing to Mr Disraeli on October 31, 1861, he says:—

Some booksellers have entrapped me into a promise to write an account of our financial policy, and have forthwith advertised the work, as if it existed anywhere else than in the world of shadows. I am therefore trying to make a start, but don't expect to do much down here, away from all books of reference.

. . . I suppose that the process of composing the pemmican of such works as M. Block's [on Finance] must be good for a man who is trying to get up a subject, although no digestion with which I am acquainted can assimilate the article when put before one to read.

Sir Stafford's book is, at least, remarkably excellent pemmican. But his conclusions, as to how the country stood after the years between 1841 and 1862, were not very cheerful—that is, for him, who became famous for thinking he “saw a bit of blue” in a dirty sky. The wealth of the country had increased, owing to the effects of steam and other mechanical “advantages.” But the expenditure had kept pace with the gains, and we had been able to spend so much, by the use of that other mechanical advantage, the income-tax. “The removal of restrictions on expenditure has promoted expenditure.” Our ordinary sources of revenue had not increased in anything like proportion to our expenses. We were constantly drawing on our reserve, the income-tax, “and it is a grave question whether this is to be regarded as a proof of financial strength.” The Russian war altered everything for the worse, “infecting the whole nation, and not this nation only, but all Europe also, with ideas of extravagance.” All parties were to blame, “and each may retort upon the other the arguments which any one may use.” “Public spirit must take precedence of party spirit, and a general view of the policy most conducive to the interests of England must not be eclipsed by our attachment to particular theories and particular measures.” And he sighs for an end of party and personal prejudices, and for hearty co-operation; but Zeus blew all the prayer, and not half alone, as in the Iliad, into the empty winds. What would such a policy be? The book tells us what it was not, but ends before reaching a constructive theory.

The education of destitute children had always been a matter of chief interest to Sir Stafford, and very much of his time and energy was occupied, as has been shown, with reformatory schools. On May 28, 1861, he moved for a select committee on the subject. The children who were provided for neither by the reformatories, the industrial

schools, nor the national schools, were the children for whom he spoke. A Royal Commission had just presented an elaborate report, but this part of the subject had, in his opinion, been left incomplete by the Commission. "He had heard it said that there was no such class" of children, which was merely a proof of the ignorance of the people who made that assertion. The children existed, their parents could not or would not assist them, and it was the part of the State to relieve a condition which sounded almost incredibly evil and neglected. The elements of knowledge, "and sound, moral, and religious education" were required. Neither the day schools, the industrial schools, nor the workhouse schools met the need. "Did any one believe that, because there was no place for those children in the official system, the class would therefore cease to exist, or that benevolent persons would not endeavour to deal with them?" He entreated the House not to say, "Because there are difficulties in the way, we will throw the thing overboard." Mr Lowe agreed to his motion for a committee, with a slight change, which Sir Stafford accepted, in his wording; and Mr Lowe paid a compliment to his "great ability and candour." Sir Stafford's share in a debate on Civil Service examinations (June 21, 1861) was chiefly notable for his declaration that he was "a pledged competitionist," who saw "not the slightest inconvenience or danger in open competition," and who thought that some members disliked it "because it would deprive members of that House of the advantage of putting their friends and relatives into public offices. He believed that to be at the bottom of the whole thing."

Here his parliamentary activity for the session practically ends. The year left him on a much higher level of public esteem than it had found him. To some extent he was the lieutenant of Mr Disraeli, who wrote in September about affairs in the United States: "Our friend Jonathan seems in a pretty state; it is like the failure of some ancient house, one scarcely realises the enormous results. . . . 'Tis a privilege to live in such a pantomimic age of glittering illusion and startling

surprises." This was quite in the spirit of Leo X., but even Mr Disraeli might have had enough of "startling surprises" by 1890. The house of Jonathan Brothers did *not* fail after all, and occupied more of attention than was agreeable in the next session. The vacation saw Sir Stafford president of the Archæological Association, which met in Devonshire, and was entertained at Pynes. Sir Stafford was not, as he said, an expert in archæology, but he was invaluable as a host and a president. His time was a good deal occupied, during the vacation, with finance, and with the Public Schools Commission, of which he was a member. Mr Gladstone (Nov. 12, 1861) in a long letter expressed himself jealous of any invasion of modern languages which might displace classical culture, or any portion of it, "in minds capable of following that walk." "The whole method of dealing with them" (modern languages in general) "is quite alien from strict study," a remark certainly true, at least in that period; and probably no less true to-day.

The vacation was too busy, with all those matters, and with the book on 'Financial Policy,' for much diversion. Sir Stafford wrote that, being in town on October 8, he discontinued the 'Cornhill Magazine,' and "I have now been doing penance for my offence by sitting next Thackeray at dinner," at the Athenæum. One would commit a multitude of sins for the chance of such a penance; but of the two divisions of mankind, Sir Stafford was not a Thackerayan, but a Dickensite. Happy are they who can read the lessons in both churches!

CHAPTER VII.

IN PARLIAMENT, 1862-1865.

THE "pantomimic times" ran on with their "glittering illusions," and shifting costumes of black and red. The war between the Northern and Southern States threat-

ened to drag England into it, as a sinking ship draws down a neighbouring vessel. As to Sir Stafford Northcote's feelings and sympathies in the unhappy strife of brothers, I may be permitted to quote what his old friend, Lord Coleridge, has written :¹—

One neutral observation I must be permitted to make ; neutral always, thank God, as far as party politics are concerned, but one which it was at one time rather dangerous to make ; dangerous I mean to one's personal comfort, if one made it in most social gatherings, whether in London or elsewhere. There was a time when, in the great American civil war, the sympathies of the English upper classes went with slavery, and when the North had scant justice and no mercy at their hands. I have myself seen that most distinguished man, Charles Francis Adams, subjected in society to treatment which, if he had resented it, might have seriously imperilled the relations of the two countries ; and which nothing but the wonderful self-command of a very strong man, and his resolute determination to stifle all personal feeling, and to consider himself only as the Minister of a great country, enabled him to treat, as he did, with mute disdain. But in this critical state of things in and out of Parliament, Mr Disraeli and Sir Stafford Northcote on one side, and the Duke of Argyll and Sir George Cornwall Lewis on the other, mainly contributed to keep this country neutral, and to save us from the ruinous mistake of taking part with the South. On this matter Sir Stafford Northcote thought with his usual clearness, but spoke with an energy not usual in so kind a man. I well remember his saying to me in this city [Exeter] that he hoped to live long enough to see a particular member of Mr Jefferson Davis's cabinet hanged for his treason ; and he added that he could not understand how any man could look without utter horror and loathing (they were his own words, not mine) at the prospect of a great empire founded upon slavery and committed to the maintenance of slavery as the very principle of its being. His calmness was not coldness or indifference, his gentleness was not weakness. Moral wrong (as he regarded it), oppression, cruelty, roused him to wrath and indignation, the more striking from their contrast to his habitual serenity, the more impressive from the unexpected disclosure of those depths of feeling and emotion, the existence of which was generally concealed under the veil of his quiet self-control. I do not know, but I imagine that it was

¹ Macmillan's Magazine, January 1888.

his strong sympathy with the Federal cause, and his sense of the reparation we owed to America, which led him to place his great abilities at the service of his country as one of the Commissioners of the Treaty of Washington, though the treaty was negotiated by a Government to which he was politically opposed. And I can never forget the unbroken dignity with which he sustained remarks upon himself, and the spirit with which he repelled attacks upon the provisions of the treaty, made, I must say, with complete impartiality from both sides of the House of Commons.

There will be later opportunities of illustrating his mind on this matter.

Parliament met early in February. "Dizzy has set up a small peaked beard," Sir Stafford says, mentioning this historical event in a letter to Lady Northcote. "He was in high spirits. The Queen's Speech has less in it than usual, and I suppose there will be scarcely anything said to-night" (February 6, 1862), "except in the way of condolence. We are going to take quite the right line about America. The weak point in the Government proceedings seems to be the Mexican intervention." On April 19 he was writing to Mr Disraeli the following important letter:—

42 HARLEY STREET, *April 19, 1862.*

MY DEAR MR DISRAELI,—After thinking over our conversation of this morning, I am tempted to inflict a letter upon you, because I think one puts one's ideas to the test by trying how they look on paper. I think you ought not to let slip the opportunity afforded by the second reading of the Tax Bill.

The course which the Government are taking, in embodying all taxation in a single bill, makes that bill the cardinal point upon which the whole policy of the country turns. When we are asked to assent to the second reading of a bill which grants more than twenty millions of taxes for a single year, we are bound to ask whether they are likely to be sufficient.

You have already called attention to our financial position, and to the consequences of recent legislation. The answer given to you is, that the years through which we have been passing have been "exceptional" years. That may or may not be a sufficient apology for the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but we have to consider much more important and broader questions than the question whether Gladstone has done the best that could have

been done in the "exceptional" circumstances in which he says he has been placed. We have to ask why the circumstances have been exceptional, and how long they are likely to continue exceptional, and whether anything can be done to rescue the country from this exceptional condition. What may be the consequences of an indefinite series of exceptional years it is hard to predict. One thing is clear, that the very best we can hope for is an indefinite maintenance of war taxation, and an indefinite postponement of all measures for the reduction of our debt.

But war taxation is becoming more and more oppressive, and ere long will lead to serious discontent. Hubbard's agitation for an alteration of the income-tax is an indication of this discontent. His motion is impractical, and he shrinks from grappling with the tax in Committee; but it is clear from his moving at all, and from the large amount of loose support which he receives, that the income-tax is galling the country. We hear less about the tea-duties; but there can be no doubt that these also are curtailing the comforts of our people, and that just at a time when they are most in need of comfort. It is therefore our duty to see how we can get rid of this pressure of war taxation. Now, taxation depends upon expenditure. We must look therefore to expenditure and see how far it admits of reduction. In saying this, of course I refer mainly to that portion of our expenditure which is "exceptional." The civil expenditure cannot properly be called exceptional; it has undoubtedly increased largely, and perhaps too largely of late years. Something may be done by a rigorous economy, and by such a revision as a Government might possibly make; but after all, there is not much to be got out of this kind of reduction, not enough, at all events, to enable us to do what we want to do in the way of remitting taxation. We come then to the military expenditure, and this has now reached a point at which it is necessary for us to come to a decision whether this pitting of Armstrong against Cowper Coles, and Cowper Coles against Armstrong, is to go on for ever. There is no assignable limit to the progress of mechanical invention, and while we are stimulating such men as Whitworth to devote their minds to the study of the science of destruction, we may be quite sure that it will go on advancing until we cry, Hold! The only possible solution of the question between guns and targets is the beef-eater's solution of the difficulty in the 'Critic': "In the Queen's name, drop your swords and daggers." Well, if there is no natural limit to this competition, we are driven to ask Parliament—How long do you mean to go on in this way? and what are your objects? Are we arming for self-defence, or for the attain-

ment of some object of material importance to the country, or in order that we may exercise a certain amount of influence in the councils of Europe?

As regards self-defence, which it is undoubtedly the first duty of a Government to provide for, it is of two kinds: there is the general state of defensive preparation in which a nation ought at all times to be found; and there is the exceptional state of preparation which becomes necessary when it is expecting an attack. Are our present preparations of the first kind, or of the last? If of the first, we cannot say that they are exceptional, and we must make up our minds to continue to bear the burden they entail. But then it is necessary that we should seriously review our position, and accommodate our financial arrangements to the real state of things. To keep the income-tax upon its present footing in order to maintain the defences of the country in a normal condition, is utterly at variance with every rule of prudence. The income-tax is our reserve for a time of war, and to use it up in time of peace is to weaken one of the chief defences of the country in time of war. The case is still worse if we not only use it up, but make it an instrument for destroying other sources of income. But perhaps we are spending exceptional sums upon our defences in anticipation of an attack. If so, from what quarter are we threatened? So far as we can see, nobody is threatening us at all, nor is there any apparent reason why anybody should threaten us. Of course it is possible that the Government may be pursuing a course of policy which may have a tendency to embroil us with some other Power; but nothing of the kind is put forward by them. They may say, however, that the world is in an uneasy state, that war may unexpectedly break out in some unexpected quarter, and that we may find ourselves forced to take part in it. This would be going a step beyond self-defence. No nation engaging in war with another nation would wantonly attack England and so bring her into the field: if we are to take part in a general war at all, it must be by our own choice, and for good and sufficient reasons. Here then, again, we come to the question—Are our preparations for war of a normal or of an exceptional character, and if of an exceptional character, what are the grounds for exceptional apprehensions?

But then we come to the question of the influence of the country in the councils of Europe. Now the influence of England, standing alone, must always be considerable; but the influence of England and France, acting cordially together, will be not only considerable, but paramount. Why then should they not act cordially together? There is no material opposition of

interests between them : on the contrary, the true interest of each is that the other should be strong and prosperous. The one has just what the other wants. But they look at the questions of the day from different points of view, and will differ as to the line of policy which ought to be pursued. That is true ; but it is no disadvantage, for it will ensure the full and careful consideration of great questions.

No man can see both sides of a question with equal clearness ; at least if he can, he will probably be unfit for action. What one wants is a friend who will look at the matter in a different light, and who will fairly take counsel with one as to the line to be followed. But to make this possible, the allies must lay aside their jealousy of one another.

To be acting together, and at the same time to be arming against one another, is an absurdity ; and observe how it weakens the influence of the united Powers. We should never have had the Russian war if Nicholas could have brought himself to believe that France and England would act cordially together against him. Why is it, again, that we find the Americans trying so hard to magnify the one country and to decry the other ? Of course it is in the hope of sowing discord between us ; and while we parade our distrust of each other, we invite other countries to try to sow discord.

But can we trust France if we cease to arm against her ? Must not we in prudence "keep ourselves strong" ? To these questions I reply—first, can France trust us ? The position of France, and especially of the Emperor, is one of much embarrassment. Are we not adding to that embarrassment ?

We mistrust the intentions of France, and are conscious that our own intentions are perfectly pure ; but is not our conduct such as very naturally to induce France to mistrust us ? and is it not conceivable that the intentions of France are as pure as our own ? I think such an incident as that you mentioned this morning is enough to make the Emperor cry out, *La perfide Albion !* We say that he is always playing a game of his own ; surely he may return the compliment, and with great show of reason. With regard to his game, he may fairly say that he has been compelled by the necessity of his position to do many things which he would not willingly have done, and which may have been displeasing to us ; but that the reason has been that we have declined to act in concert with him, or to make sufficient allowance for his difficulties, and that at all events when we have been acting together he has never tried to trip us up.

But, secondly, I admit that, whether we trust France or not, it is our business to keep ourselves strong ; only I question

whether throwing away large sums of money upon parade movements and costly armaments is the way to effect the object.

We showed in the Russian war both our weakness and our strength. Our strength consisted in the elasticity of our resources, the temper of our people, the length of our purse, and our power of endurance. All these are still unimpaired, and France knows, and Europe knows, that they are the true constituents of our greatness. Our weakness was shown in the confusion of our arrangements, the complexity of our military system, the want of military skill, or, at all events, the absence of the highest qualities in our commanders. No doubt these failings were remarked upon, and more than enough was made of them. But since that time we have shown in India, we have shown in China, and we have shown in our brush with the United States, that the lessons of the Crimea have not been lost on us. France knows, and Europe knows, that while the elements of our strength remain unimpaired, we have done much to purge ourselves of the elements of weakness. We have done enough to re-establish our reputation; now let us beware of undermining our true strength. Are not some of our military men a little like the stag in the fable, who thought his horns were everything and his legs nothing? They make a great deal of our display of military strength, and think us low peddling fellows when we talk of the cost. But if we ever have to put our strength out for a great contest, it is our financial superiority that will carry us through, if anything does.

I come round, then, to these as the sentiments which I think should be expressed on the second reading of the Tax Bill: This scheme of taxation, to which you ask our assent, is only justifiable, if justifiable at all, in what you call exceptional years. This coming year, 1862-63, ought not to be an exceptional year in point of expenditure. If you are pursuing a course of policy which makes exceptional policy necessary, you are pursuing a very wrong course, and one which, for anything we see, you will have great difficulty in justifying. We have voted your supplies, and we will not refuse you your ways and means, for to all appearances you will not have more than you want; but there is no reason why the Government should spend all that the House of Commons has given them the power to spend, and we call upon you at once to review your expenditure, and to begin forthwith upon those reductions which you alone are able to make without embarrassing the public service.

The occasion seems to me one for a great statesmanlike speech, with as little as possible of personal attack. Personalities would engender personalities, and the real points would be obscured.

Besides, it is most important that our own friends should see that we are not trying to get Cobden and Bright to join us in an onslaught on Lord Palmerston; but that we are delivering our testimony upon matters which we regard as of high national importance. I hope, if you get so far as this, you won't think me impertinent for saying this, and for speaking freely what comes up in my mind.

Now, with regard to the order of proceeding, I cannot help thinking that if you could get Sir E. Lytton to begin, and were to reserve yourself till after Lord Palmerston had spoken, it would be the most effective arrangement. If Sir E. Lytton would not undertake it, then I think it would be best that you should yourself begin, and that no reply to Lord Palmerston should be attempted, for he had better not be answered at all than answered badly. But I should above all things like to see the question opened by a broad, liberal, philosophical, and eloquent speech, such as Sir E. Lytton would make. I think he would bring out better than any man in the world the blessing to mankind of a true and hearty alliance between France and England, founded upon a cordial mutual understanding; and that he would have advantages in handling the Italian, and especially the Roman question, which no one else on our side would have. I don't remember the precise line of his speech at Hitchin in the autumn, but it was sufficiently cordial to the Italians to make it impossible for Lord Palmerston to treat him as an anti-Italian, and he would have all the advantages of the *πίστις ἡθικὴ* in speaking, as I think he would speak, in favour of the French alliance as the policy most likely to do good to Italy herself.

If he would undertake to speak, I would gladly help to get together any materials he might require for the financial part of his speech, which need not be very full of details. The outline of the financial question is broad and simple enough.

I am sure you will be glad to see that there is an end to my letter after all, so I will only subscribe myself, yours very faithfully,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

The Right Honble. B. Disraeli, M.P.

As to the argument of "exceptional years," Sir Stafford had already told the House (April 7) that, if I may put it so, for a year not to be exceptional was the exception. The war with Russia began this lean series of exceptional years; rivalry with France and the United States pro-

longed them. What general theory of policy existed? He objected that Mr Gladstone had tried to do in two years the work of ten. In fact, he seems continually to have regarded Mr Gladstone as "in a hurry," and "expecting all things in an hour;" and that, as far as I understand Sir Stafford's ultimate ideas, was the main difference between these two financiers. In writing to Mr Disraeli (April 25), during the Easter vacation, Sir Stafford gives, in a familiar shape, the gist of his opinions.

The doctrines I should lay down are,—1st, that the income-tax ought not to be permanently retained as a portion of our ordinary taxation; 2d, that our ordinary revenue ought to be kept up to an amount fully sufficient to cover our ordinary expenditure; 3d, that we ought therefore to settle the scale of our ordinary expenditure as soon as may be, and then to adjust our ordinary taxation to it. This may probably involve the necessity of some addition to our direct taxation; but this is a step to which, if the income-tax were taken off, there would be no objection in principle, though the details would be difficult. 4th, I would say that I see no reason why we should not at once set about that which is the first step in the process—namely, the reduction of our expenditure towards its proper ordinary level. It is under this last head, of course, that any reference to foreign affairs would naturally come. I am shy of attempting one, yet I think I might say as much as this, that the acknowledged policy of England is one of non-intervention; that of course this does not preclude us from offering our advice upon proper occasions, but that it is not necessary or right to attempt to give weight to that advice by a show of military preparation, unless we intend to follow it up by military action, in case the advice is rejected. Armed non-intervention is very liable to be misconstrued. We are all interested in the welfare of Italy; we all wish that she may enjoy that form of government which suits her best; and we must all rejoice when any nation of its own free-will adopts and successfully practises constitutional government.

We cannot but be conscious of the great difficulties under which Italy labours, and, in particular, we cannot shut our eyes to the intricacy and importance of the problem presented to us at Rome. It is natural and right that, as a friend to all parties, we should give the best advice in our power to Italy, to France, to any other nation whose interests are involved in the settlement of the question. But we neutralise the effect of that

advice if we awaken the jealousy of France by ostentatiously arming against her ; and we should commit a crime against Italy if we were to lead her to take rash steps on the faith of a material assistance which we did not mean to give in her time of need. So, too, with the United States : it is most natural and proper that we should give our advice and use our influence to bring the contest to an end, if we think we can do so with advantage ; but we neutralise the influence we might expect to exercise if we show any indications of an intention to use force. If we mean to make a demand, and to insist upon compliance with it, by all means let us show our strength, as we did in the Trent affair. But do the Government contemplate anything of the kind ? I apprehend not.

I might add that in both these cases the real interests of France are identical with the real interests of England ; that France and England, cordially acting together, might bring about the best solution of these questions ; but that cordiality seems essential, and our policy in the matter of armaments indicates not cordiality but distrust.

If I said anything like this, I should apologise for travelling out of my beat, and should return to the question of finance, pointing out the difference between Gladstone's language at Manchester and the language of Sir G. Lewis and Lord C. Paget in the House—he saying that it is perfectly easy to cut down expenditure, they virtually saying it is impossible—and I would urge the necessity of either accommodating our taxation to our expenditure, or our expenditure to our taxation, and, above all, of letting us know the truth as to the views of the Government.

Perhaps you will think over the propriety of my saying as much as this.—Yours very faithfully,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

In his speech of May 8, he repeated his objections to voting the income-tax frequently at varying rates, and from year to year, and wished to be done with this provisional system. He reviewed Mr Gladstone's recent speech at Manchester, but did not persuade Mr Gladstone that the speech had been inconsistent with his remarks in the House of Commons. He attempted to put Mr Gladstone's utterances "into plain English"; but Mr Gladstone, in his reply, said that the plain English of Sir Stafford was not what he meant. "My English is my own child" (who ever thought his own

child "plain" ?), "and I greatly prefer it to the construction so liberally placed on it by my hon. friend. . . . He mutilates and mangles it so that I cannot recognise it."

Sir Stafford asked where was the financial reserve for war-time, which Peel had found in the income-tax. He criticised Mr Gladstone severely; but then, as Mr Gladstone denied that the criticism was applicable, we need scarcely stir the embers of this fiery logomachy. Time has thrown his dust on it, *pulveris exigui jactu*. Sir Stafford then touched on foreign affairs, repeating much of what he had written to Mr Disraeli. He saw nobody meditating an attack on England, no need for "exceptional preparations."

Mr Gladstone was probably right when he answered that Sir Stafford was applauded "during nearly an hour of critical attack; but the ready cheers entirely failed him, and left him to ply his wings and oars as best he could without support, the moment he began to preach the unpopular doctrine of public economy."

In the debate on the Government demand for money to be spent on fortifications, Sir Stafford examined the financial aspect of the question. He objected to the mode of providing for such a large expenditure by way of loan, fixing the burden on posterity. It might, of course, be readily argued on the other side that posterity would have to pay in one shape or other—"in maut or in meal," as the Scotch saw runs. He thought Government would have made a more moderate demand and examined the matter with greater care had the money been raised by taxation. Lord Palmerston observed that, two years before, Sir Stafford had adopted the view of the Government and voted for a loan. Sir Stafford finally moved to insert in the bill a proviso that the money should not be applied to any work not specifically named in the schedule, nor to apply to any work any greater sum than was set down as the total estimated cost, with other expedients for keeping the scheme under the control of the House. With alterations suggested by Sir George Lewis, the proviso was agreed to.

The occasion, and Mr Bernal Osborne's opposition to

the Government, gave birth to the following epigram of Sir Stafford's construction, which he sent (June 26) to Mr Disraeli. "How will the epigram do?

*"Aeratos muros cum condimus aere alieno
Fronte tua magnum est, Bernale noster, opus."*

Mr Osborne had denounced a "hobgoblin speech" in which the need of fortifications was asserted.

Sir Stafford took no other prominent share in the debates of the year. Indeed for three or four years afterwards he spoke little, and "only when he had something to say," being therefore regarded as a "business member."

The book on Financial Policy came out in August 1862, and produced a long criticism from Mr Gladstone, complimenting him on the skill with which he had composed an eminently readable book on a dry subject, and on his tact, good feeling, and love of truth. Mr Gladstone's letter is full of minute and most interesting criticism of details; but, on the whole, he agrees with Sir Stafford as to the increase of expenditure, and the dangers of "drawing on our reserve."

A considerable part of Sir Stafford's time and attention were now engaged by the Public Schools Commission, on the nine public schools of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St Paul's, Merchant Taylors', Harrow, Rugby, and Shrewsbury. The Earl of Clarendon, the Earl of Devon, Lord Lyttleton, Mr Twisleton, Mr William Hepworth Thompson, Henry Halford Vaughan, and Sir Stafford were the members. The schools were visited in 1862, and witnesses were examined till May 1863, the total number called being 130. The Commission met 127 times, and issued a long report in 1864. Mr Gladstone then observed, in the House (May 6, 1864), that he "did not think any more signal instance could be quoted of the devotion of public men to an inquiry involving innumerable difficulties than that of the Commissioners." Sir Stafford, in acknowledging these compliments, admitted that, to old public-schoolmen like himself, their task had been difficult and invidious. They had determined to hush up nothing, but probe it to the

bottom. The schools had been attempting to move with the times, but they needed legislative help in adapting to the new needs the old machinery. Parliament, he held, should not attempt to deal with the subjects of study nor the management of the schools. They should deal with endowments, with the constitution of the governing bodies, and remove restrictions. "The English mind did not want *lycées* and *gymnasias*, but schools for the moral, physical, and intellectual training of boys between twelve and eighteen, which should make of these boys young men,—men in every sense of the word. . . . Let the schools be set free and enabled to accommodate the new studies lately thrust upon them to the old learning, for the promotion of which they were founded." The scheme of the Government was that of which he and the other Commissioners approved. He discussed the question of bullying at Westminster, where the help of the House was needed, by reason of the insufficient accommodations, and insufficient provision of servants. "Westminster had disadvantages, and deserved to be treated tenderly."

An old Eton boy, it seems, had this loyalty towards an old opponent.

The end of January 1863 found Sir Stafford in town again. "I suppose some mischief is brewing, and I must go and help to throw in a few ingredients. I am getting into rather better spirits at the prospect of having a good row next week." He sketched the financial year for Mr Disraeli, "on very insufficient data." On April 17 he criticised the Budget, without any "hostile remarks"; but he thought Mr Gladstone had overestimated the Excise, as he had predicted. Mr Gladstone's "besetting sin" was to expect too much from spirits. The Budget, however, was "based upon the only true, wise, and safe basis of calculation for the reduction of taxation upon wise and broad reductions of expenditure." "He did not wish the Government to go faster than they had done, but he trusted they would not think they had quite reached the end of the policy of reduction." He did not think that *all* the rags brought into the country were brought by the repeal of the paper duties. "They were ex-

tensively used in the manufacture of a material which was somewhat irreverently termed 'shoddy.' He might have added that "the Liberal shepherds give a grosser name"—devil's dust! But he "expressed general approval."

His other speeches of the year were on matters long forgotten, and his correspondence is purely domestic, and contains nothing that need be lingered over.

The new year, 1864, began with apprehensions of war, which Sir Stafford thought we might be dragged into—the war between Denmark on one side, and Austria-Prussia on the other. The Queen was understood to be strongly opposed to war for Denmark; and a minority at least of the Cabinet, with the Tory leaders, was also anxious not to fight. On February 3, Sir Stafford writes from London to Lady Northcote:—

Lord Stanhope told me yesterday that it was pretty certain that there were two parties in the Cabinet—the one headed by Lord Palmerston, which is strongly for war, the other by Gladstone, which is strongly for peace; and that Lord Russell had been one of the peace party, but had now gone over to the war party. If they cannot make up their differences, and any important member of the Cabinet on either side goes out, I think there can be no doubt but that they must break up. If the peace party give way, and they get the Queen's consent to go to war, they may possibly succeed in carrying a majority of the House of Commons with them, for I am afraid there is a strong war feeling among our supporters; but the Queen is so set against the war, that encouraged as she will be by Lord Derby's and Disraeli's language to-morrow, I should think she would rather dismiss her Ministry and call in Lord Derby than give in. Besides, I cannot bring myself to believe that Gladstone will give way. The more likely alternative is, that the war party will be beaten, and that we shall have a peace Speech; in which case the Cabinet may live, though they will have to go through a great deal of humiliation. If they do take this line, Lord Russell will have to make up his mind to more and juster abuse than he has had to bear for a long time. Everybody says that the Queen's reception of Lord Derby the other day was most cordial. I have no doubt that she wishes him to take the Government; and I have not much fear of the result if he did so, as, although we have some strong Danish feeling in our party, I do not believe that the Conservatives as a body can wish to go to war

with our old German allies, with France hanging on our flank, ready to play her own game on the Rhine as soon as England is fairly committed against Prussia. I believe that many difficulties, which are now insoluble, on account of the mess Johnny Russell has got into, might be got over by a new Ministry, and that we might succeed in bringing about a settlement which Austria, and probably Prussia too, must in their hearts desire.

If Lord Palmerston were a younger man, and the peace party in the Cabinet consisted only of Gladstone and Milner Gibson, I should think it possible that he might try to go on without them, and in defiance of our leaders, rallying to himself the Conservative warriors, and perhaps attracting some such men as Robert Cecil into his party; but I think he is too old to succeed in this sort of game now, besides that the Queen is too strongly against him, and Lord Russell too much damaged, for it to succeed. In any case, I expect if the Cabinet breaks up to see Gladstone and Milner Gibson go straight to the head of the Radicals, and probably give us their support for a time on questions of foreign policy.

After reading the Queen's Speech "at Dizzy's," who "has gout—a good omen for a future premier"—

we agreed that it was the most extraordinary production of the kind we had ever seen. It gives the go-by to all the difficult questions, and, as regards Schleswig-Holstein, amounts to a request that Parliament will direct the Government what line to take. The peace party have carried the Cabinet so far, and have obviously altered the speech; for the paragraphs about Denmark begin with an elaborate recital of the treaty of 1852, obviously laying the ground for an attack upon the German Powers who were parties to it and who have broken it, and then suddenly end by saying that her Majesty will continue to use her endeavours in the interest of peace, without giving the slightest hint of her being aware that peace has been broken, or that she has ever heard of the course pursued by Austria and Prussia. What the Government evidently wish is, that the Houses of Parliament should take the initiative with some strong expression of feeling which may guide their policy. I hope they will be disappointed, and that we shall content ourselves with calling on them to explain their own views more particularly. I think, however, that there is now less chance of their breaking up than was supposed. They will submit to a good deal of humiliation, and go on for a time. But it is very uncertain whether they will last out the session.

Besides these preoccupations, the mechanical work before him was harassing. He was on committees of Public Accounts, Irish Taxation, and Schools of Art. He wanted no fighting in Parliament, or as little as might be; but Mr Disraeli was "blue-moulded for want of a bating."

I am going to the *levée* presently, and then to a meeting at Lord Derby's, at which I mean to advocate prudent counsels and no fighting. I think, from what Dizzy said yesterday, that he will take the same line; but there is a pugnacity about him which alarms me. He was on the point of committing us to a battle on the malt tax, but I think I have stopped that. I told him we were waiting for an inheritance, and must take care not to lose it by attempting to seize it too soon. He wound up our conversation by saying that we must be very careful not to put the Government in a minority upon anything. They would be but too glad of a good excuse for dissolving while Lord Palmerston is at their head. However, we shall probably have some hot counsels this afternoon.

In an Oxford squabble of this date, Sir Stafford, as a Balliol man, was on the right side. The clerical party were anxious to keep the salary of the Greek professor, Mr Jowett, at the medieval figure of £40, while all other similar salaries had been raised. Mr Jowett, no doubt, would have been "passing rich" even on that proverbial income, but justice was done. Sir Stafford says:—

You will see in to-day's 'Times' a letter of mine about the Jowett vote. I am rather glad to have the opportunity of giving my reasons for the vote I should have given. Some of my friends (Lygon, &c.) are very indignant with me; and Palmer grinned much at what he evidently considered my rashness. I don't myself think it will do me any harm with reference even to a possible Oxford contest [he was thinking of standing for the University]; but I don't now look to or desire one, and am at any rate clear that it is for my true interest that my friends there should know exactly how far I do go and how far I do not go with them. Palmer's caution may get him into trouble hereafter.¹

On April 11 was the Garibaldi procession, and Sir

¹ March 2, 1864, 'Times.'

Stafford, amidst the cosmopolitan excitement, was engaged on the Schools of Art Committee. He *did*, however, view "the hero's back driving very fast in an open carriage along Pall Mall." He also had the honour of a short conversation with Garibaldi at one of Mrs Gladstone's evening parties. On the 8th of July an attempt to censure the Government about the Danish war was defeated, in spite of great hopes, by the aid of Lord Palmerston's popularity, and Sir Stafford writes, as to the division, "There are no end of stories of Lady Palmerston's and Mrs Gladstone's proceedings, under the excitement of alarm. As soon as the division was over, Lord Palmerston hurried up-stairs to the Ladies' Gallery, and met Lady Palmerston on the first landing, coming down. They threw themselves into one another's arms!"

Such is the lighter record of events, which he prepared for Lady Northcote, who was passing the summer in the country.

At this period of his parliamentary career it not unfrequently happened that Sir Stafford, instead of speaking on certain subjects in the House, stated his views in letters to Mr Disraeli. In those letters he could express himself with a freedom and succinctness which the forms and responsibilities of Parliament did not always permit, and thus it happens that these epistles contain the marrow of his political speculations. For example, on February 14, 1864, he writes from Pynes to Mr Disraeli on the great subjects which at that moment interested England, especially on our foreign policy. Not only were the affairs of Schleswig-Holstein, of Poland, of the States supremely important, but we were on the verge of Chinese entanglements. The Taeping Rebellion was at its height. We would say nothing against gallant men "justly struggling for freedom" against a "foreign dynasty," which had only been settled in China for two centuries and a half or so. Radical sentiment was naturally on the Taeping side: the Mantchu throne, like so many thrones, was "tottering"; GORDON had received a check, and had been wounded; our expedition to put down piracy, under Captain

Sherard Osborn, had failed through Chinese jealousy; there were "atrocities" on both sides (as the Soochow massacre); our interests in the neighbourhood (thirty miles radius) of the Treaty Ports were threatened; Kago-sima we had bombarded; and had England been the old England, it is extremely probable that some new Clive or Warren Hastings would have "saddled us with a new India," or "added a fresh and considerable jewel" (as you like to put it) to the English crown. Gordon, however, was not a Clive or a Warren Hastings, but the purest of men, and England and the world were not what they had been a hundred years before. It was in these circumstances, when Lord Palmerston was displaying the "old buccaneering temper," that Sir Stafford wrote the following letter to Mr Disraeli:—

PYNES, EXETER, *Feb. 18, 1864.*

MY DEAR MR DISRAELI,—I am quite conscious that a man who deliberately sits down to write a long letter on political questions raises against himself the presumption that there is something radically amiss in his mental composition; but I feel myself under the necessity of saying my say upon one or two matters, which appear to me to be of vital importance at the present time, both to ourselves as a party, and still more to the general interests of the country.

The point upon which I feel the greatest anxiety of all is, the line which we should take upon Liddell's motion with regard to China. The more I reflect upon the question he raises, the more strongly do I feel that it is the one above all others upon which it is nationally important that Parliament should pronounce a clear verdict, and upon which it is important for us as a party to take a bold, broad, and intelligible course, and to show that we are prepared to deal with it in the spirit of statesmen and not of partisan politicians.

And the reason I take the liberty of writing to you now is, that I am anxious to bring under your consideration the propriety of holding a conference upon it, and after clearly marking out our line, calling our friends together and explaining it to them.

It seems to me that the present crisis is one which brings strongly into view the difficulties which arise in the conduct of our foreign affairs, generally from the constitutional relations between the Crown and Parliament.

It belongs to Parliament, no doubt, to lay down the broad general outlines of the foreign policy of the country. It belongs also to Parliament to criticise the action of the Ministry when fully informed of it. But the difficulty of criticising while our information is imperfect, and the uselessness of criticising after the event, detract seriously from the value of the parliamentary check, in nine cases out of ten which arise. Moreover, in regard to our European policy, I apprehend that we may consider that the great outlines of our course are already laid down, so that disputes which may arise will ordinarily turn upon questions of detail, questions of degree, questions of personal conduct, and so forth; and upon these we are embarrassed by the imperfection of our information, or by the personal and party feelings and recriminations which must be imported into our discussions. Again, in complicated and difficult questions like those of Schleswig and Poland, men who speak under a sense of responsibility and with the knowledge that they may be called upon to act, must necessarily speak with reserve and caution, and thus will often present to the world the appearance of being captious critics of others with no policy of their own.

But the question raised with regard to China is one of a wholly different character from these European problems. We are not asked to criticise or pass censure, and though we may have to do so incidentally, I hope we shall keep as clear of all irritating topics as possible. What we are asked to do is to lay down the outlines of an imperial policy in the extreme East, for what we may decide upon in China cannot fail greatly to affect our future course in Japan also; and it strikes me that it is at once of paramount importance to England that those outlines should now be firmly traced, and of very great importance to ourselves as a party, that we should show ourselves capable of tracing them.

I don't mean to put the two objects on a level; but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that we suffer in public estimation from our apparent want of a policy of our own on some great national questions, and I cannot but look on this Eastern question as a great opportunity for us to come forward and set our policy against that of Lord Palmerston.

The occasion is a peculiarly favourable one. There is no attack upon absent British officials, as in the *Lorcha* case or the *Kagosima* case; no risk of weakening our own friends and encouraging our enemies, no maudlin sympathy with barbarians against Englishmen, none of those topics of which Lord Palmerston was able to avail himself in 1857. It is not even a question whether we should draw back from a course to which we have pledged ourselves. Providentially, the failure of the *Lay* and

Osborn expedition clears the ground for us, and leaves us free to choose our future course without a shade of reproach. At the same time, we have our warning written up in such plain characters that the blindest of us can hardly fail to read them. The rebuff to Osborn shows what we may expect if our officers are to be independent of Chinese authority; the Soochow massacre shows what will happen if they submit to it. We have at the same moment this almost unexampled conjunction of favourable conditions; practical examples illustrating the working of a policy, and perfect freedom from committal to that policy. No such conjuncture can be expected again.

Individually, I should be disposed to condemn the policy which has led to the present state of things; but I see no reason why we should be severe upon it. There are men who wished well to Osborn's attempt, and who even thought that we were in a manner bound to repair the injury we had done to the Imperialist cause by our (very questionable) war with China, and who yet feel, now, that the experiment has failed, and need not, and indeed ought not, to be repeated or pursued further. It would, I think, well become us to take our stand on general grounds, to let bygones be bygones, except for the sake of the lessons they teach us, and to call upon Parliament to lay down now a clear and intelligible principle of strict non-intervention in the domestic troubles of Asiatic, as well as of European and American nations.

We ought not to forget that the thoughtful men are becoming alarmed at the magnitude of our empire, and at the danger lest the pulsations of the heart should not be strong enough for the size of the frame. Neither ought we to forget the lesson which the growth of our Indian Empire should have taught us, of the certain consequences of intermeddling with the domestic concerns of semi-civilised or Asio-civilised (if I may coin such a word) nations. Nor ought we to shut our eyes to the risk we run in encouraging the strange buccaneering spirit, which is as characteristic of Englishmen now as in the days of Elizabeth, and which is compounded of love of gain, love of adventure, love of fighting, a certain kind of religious feeling, and a dominant conviction of the superiority of the English race to all foreigners, of whatsoever nation or colour. Those wild resolutions of Fer-rand's have a vein of truth in them. There are English merchants who will go anywhere on the face of the globe to push their trade.

Wherever an Englishman goes, he is perfectly convinced that his countrymen at home ought to go to war on his behalf rather than be insulted, as he calls it, in his person. We are therefore

continually in a dilemma between submitting to an outrage and bombarding a Kagosima; and from such dilemmas we can hardly hope to free ourselves. But for heaven's sake do not let us add to our burdens the weight of the Chinese Empire, which it is as plain as Euclid that we shall do if we take upon ourselves the conduct of its civil wars. Think of the frightful position in which Lay and Osborn would have placed us. Osborn accepting orders through Lay alone; Lay conveying no orders of which he did not approve; Lay holding the purse-strings of the Custom-house; and both Lay and Osborn looking to the British Ambassador and the British Admiralty for counsel and support. And then imagine a collision between our adventurers and the Futai—a capitulation broken, a disgrace inflicted—and picture to yourself what must have been the result.

Surely it is high time that we should grapple with this great question of our relations with China in a worthy manner; that we should insist on arguing it out, keeping it apart from all petty personal differences, and not allowing the Government to ride off on a false issue, or to bluster through with an appeal to the British lion. Our own friends are so sore with the remembrance of 1857, so much afraid of an alliance with the Radicals, and I fear so little alive to the real magnitude of the question, that, unless some steps are taken to bring it properly before them, I fear they will not support us properly when the time comes; and that so not only will Lord Palmerston obtain a triumph at the moment, but, what is of far greater consequence, he will be encouraged to go on in his present course, and that the mischief which is now I think preventible, may become irreparable.

I hope you will forgive me for troubling you with all this long discourse; but I am truly anxious to see some careful provision made for a good debate, and a good division whenever Liddell can get his hearing.—Believe me, yours very faithfully,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

The Right Hon. B. Disraeli, M.P.

The main points in his argument are his usual main points: avoidance of intervention and of entanglements; desire of a policy, a reasonable policy, a permanent policy; hatred of petty personal squabbles. Yet, in March 29, at a dinner in Exeter, Sir Stafford criticised the foreign policy of the Government with considerable vivacity. "They were possessed of a marvellous secret, of a patent inven-

tion, by which they were to settle the affairs of the world without any expenditure of blood or treasure on the part of England. They were in the happy position of possessing what we may consider the patent medicine of England — 'moral influence.' He spoke of the Danish war, and blamed, not the policy of biting, but the policy of bark without bite. In another letter of July 6, on the Danish debate, he again returns to his *via media*, that *via media* so difficult to find, if indeed it exists, "between fussy interference and absolute indifference." Lord Russell, in his opinion, had interfered by finding fault with both sides, Austria-Prussia and Denmark, thereby "keeping up the quarrel, and putting England into the forefront of the strife," a position from which Lord Russell and England very expeditiously scuttled.

A few days in autumn were spent at Highclere. His shooting "was execrable," but he was consoled with an evening of ghost stories. "Mrs — had the advantage of us in having herself seen a ghost." He expected a visit from Grampus, the Highclere boggy, who, it is true, had been laid in the Red Sea for a hundred years, but his time there was now nearly expired. Sir Stafford went to York for a feast of social science, and met the ill-fated Lord Frederick Cavendish, "a very nice fellow, but a sort of incendiary Radical, something like what Lord de Grey used to be. . . . The principal delight of our friends here (Kirby Hall) is Dizzy's advice to the farmers to cross their sheep with the Cotswolds. Can't you imagine him gravely giving it, as if he knew the difference between a Cotswold and a Southdown?" The letters of the vacation are not otherwise interesting, except for a regret that Edward I. did not live to win the battle of Bannockburn. There is just one other point, to be seized by the folk-lorist, eager for a rare chance in those grounds. Sir Stafford refers to a story of "The False Nurse," which interested the children. "She was the attendant of a youth named Young Lumpton, concerning whom Mrs — knows a ballad, though nobody else seems to know it." Now, in the ballad of "Lamkin" we read—

“ But the nourice was a false limmer
As e'er hung on a tree.
She laid a plot wi' Lamkin,
Whan her lord was o'er the sea.”

Lamkin killed the baby, a child of Lord Wearie's, because Lord Wearie would not pay Lamkin's little bill. Thus, in the Scotch version, Lamkin is the traitor; in the version referred to by Sir Stafford, Young Lumpton (clearly the same name as Lamkin) is the victim of the false nourice. Miss Landon published an English version, called “Long Lonkin.” There are also “Bold Rankin,” and “Long Lankyn,” and “Belinkin,” and “Lambert Linkin.”¹

In January 1865, Sir Stafford stayed at Burghley, and met Mr Disraeli there. “Dizzy is in great force, meaning, *I hope*, to be very prudent next session.” Visiting his son Henry at Merton, he found “the neglect of dress rather scandalous here, and shocking to my old-fashioned notions.” Democracy again! “I feel a sort of envy of the boys, and a pleasant remembrance of old times. How I should like to begin my life over again, and go over exactly the same course, if one could be allowed to amend a few steps here and there.”

He was alone in town this spring, “deprived of the whole joy of my life,” and “drowning my sorrows in the bowl,” the temperate bowl. “I am beginning to entertain” (this is not *à propos* of the bowl) “some doubts of my own identity. Two or three people yesterday said I had been seen going about with my arm in a sling. Adderley says he thought he saw me coming into the House in that condition. Just this minute I met young Puller, who shook hands, and asked me about my volunteering, and my position drill, taking me for some lawyer, who is a friend of his.” We all have our doubles, our “Blobbs of Wadham,” as in Mr James Payn's amusing tale, but we very seldom find out who he is. As a rule, not a very reputable person.

He was now in the Endowed Schools Commission, and hoped, in this even larger labour, to get on quicker than

¹ Child's English and Scotch Ballads (London, 1861), iii. 94. Professor Child seems not to know “Young Lumpton.”

in the Public Schools Inquiry. The year 1865 unluckily contains none of his letters to Mr Disraeli, and Sir Stafford's adventures and opinions have to be disentangled from his private correspondence. He thought things looked ill for his party (March 2) in view of the general election of July. On March 29, he writes thus about Mr Gladstone and the Irish Church:—

Gladstone made a terribly long stride in his downward progress last night, and denounced the Irish Church in a way which shows how, by-and-by, he will deal not only with it but with the Church of England too. I wonder how the 'Guardian' will get over it, and what Palmer thought of him. As to —, I suppose he will go any lengths. As Moore Stevens said, "A man who insists on drinking Gladstone claret because it is called Gladstone's will do anything." He was at the Commission yesterday, and very friendly. Hardy made an admirable speech last night. I should think the Oxford election must have been pretty well settled by the contrast between his speech and Gladstone's. The latter was evidently annoyed that his colleagues had decided on opposing Dillwyn's motion. He laid down the doctrines that the tithe was national property, and ought to be dealt with by the State in the manner most advantageous to the people; and that the Church of England was only national because the majority of the people still belonged to her, and that the tithe ought to be applied not to the general advantage of the Church, but to the advantage of the people in the district from which it was derived. Consequently it is plain that he must hold that the tithe of Wales, where the Dissenters are in a majority, does not properly belong to the Church; and by-and-by we shall find that he will carry the principle a great deal further. It is sad to see what he is coming to.

It is not of equal importance, but it is diverting to read that Lord Clarendon, the chairman of the Public Schools Commission, made a false quantity in his speech in the Public Schools debate. Canon Cook was defeated at an election for the Athenæum (by the Committee probably) in favour of Mr Mark Pattison, "an essayist and reviewer. It looks bad for our theology."

In the midst of matters no longer important, and "a horrible Donnybrook sort of affair" in the Committee on Irish taxation, came the terrible news of President

Lincoln's murder. Sir Stafford's letter may be quoted: he had said little in public, when most men said too much, about the war in the United States:—

The news from Washington was afterwards confirmed. Is it not horrible? I don't know when I have felt so much upset by a public event. One had come to feel quite a personal interest in Lincoln, and to wish to see him carry this great work through; and now both he is cut off, and a most unworthy successor takes his place, and there must be a fierce spirit engendered against the South, which will breed fierce resentment in return, and quite destroys one's hope that the end of the war would bring about a return of kindness. It is touching to see that Lincoln had been speaking kindly of Lee and others in the Cabinet that morning. Seward too will be a loss if, as I suppose, he dies.

An awkward circumstance was at hand—Mr Gladstone's election at Oxford, where Sir Stafford had thought of standing. We have seen how hard Sir Stafford worked for his old friend in earlier days. Now, when he was canvassed, he "felt low," and "I have been obliged to reply that I don't intend to vote at all. I would rather have lost my own seat, I think." In his own election, at Stamford (July 14), he met with no opposition. In his speech there, he criticised finance; but praised the Government for not interfering, as he believed the Emperor of the French would readily have done, in the affairs of America. He argued for economy, on the broad ground that the poor pay a greater proportion of taxes than the rich. He said nothing about Reform as an imminent question.

In August he went to Hawarden. "The Gladstones were most affectionate." Mr Gladstone behaved with the greatest kindness and cordiality on this occasion. He told Sir Stafford (July 21) that it was "not his fault, but his misfortune," that he (Sir Stafford) was not his successor at Oxford, where he was beaten, going to South Lancashire. He had wished to retire from Oxford, and would have given Sir Stafford notice in good time. But he was advised to contest the University seat. He received from Sir Stafford himself "a kind—nay, an affectionate letter." It had been Sir Stafford's intention to

vote for his opponent and old friend, if his vote could have turned the election. It would be pleasant to quote all the words of this wise and kindly letter. The friendships of politicians are indeed devastated by politics, by religion, as well as by death. Mr Gladstone's correspondence with Sir Stafford on Church Establishment and religion at this juncture was, as he says, their first on such matters for a long time, and likely to be their last. It is no breach of confidence to remark that it contained Mr Gladstone's familiar opinions on the comparative merits of Belief and Establishment. With this friendly interchange of ideas, the chronicle may end for the year.

Lord Palmerston had died, and with him old England.

The year 1866 was as important in the career of Sir Stafford as in the life of the nation. The Government proposed a Reform Bill, which was thrown out by Whig malcontents acting with the Tories, and the Conservatives came in under Lord Derby. Then began the *régime* of Conservative Ministries in office, checked by violent Liberal agitation in London and in the country. Then began, or rather continued, for Peel had commenced what Peel's opponent revived, the Conservatives' system of stealing the Radical clothes, according to the old saying, and producing the very measures they were expected to resist. Such were the "pantomimic illusions," more or less glittering, of Mr Disraeli. For his part, Sir Stafford now first entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, while later, after some famous Tory secessions, he became Secretary for India. In the earlier half of this year he kept a private diary, and nothing can give a better idea of the inner hopes and fears, and combinations of the time, than this diary itself. We print it here—that is, next in place, Chapter VIII.—with a very few necessary excisions. It is greatly to be regretted that Sir Stafford never persevered very long with those records, which are much more valuable materials for intimate history of events and characters than can usually be obtained.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIARY, FEBRUARY TO JULY 1866.

Feb. 1, 1866.—Came up to London for the meeting of the new Parliament. There are 193 new members, of whom 150 have never sat in any Parliament. The majority for the Liberals is considered to be about 70. There are not above 10 Conservative members from all Scotland.

Feb. 2.—Took my seat. Saw C. Ryan at the Athenæum, who says it is reported that Bright recommends delay in bringing in the Reform Bill, so that the Government may have time to consolidate themselves; and so that if beaten on some other question they may go out with their hands free, and without having put their supporters to the pain of voting for a moderate measure.

Feb. 3.—At the Carlton, F. W. Knight told me there had been a talk of putting a pressure on Dis. to oppose the Reform Bill on the second reading. K. deprecates this. Long talk with Dis. this afternoon. He says he communicated with Lord D. after the election, putting before him the scattering of our friends and the necessity of reconstruction; that he told him he thought reconstruction could not be carried through without a change of leader in one or the other House, and that he was himself willing to give up the lead in the Commons in order to facilitate it; that Lord D. rejected that idea, and did not seem to appreciate the alternative; that they had had various communications by letter and by word of mouth, and that they had discussed the question of possible arrangements with the Duke of Cleveland, Lord Clarendon, the Duke of Somerset, and others. Lord D. considered that if Dis. gave up the lead of the Commons, there was nobody for it but W. E. G., "who is quite prepared to take the high Conservative line;" "but we should never get on together, he would always be quarrelling with me, and I should be thinking he wanted to trip me up."

Dis. is of opinion that the Government will throw over Bright and bring in a moderate bill. It will be opposed by men on the Government side, and, as Dis. believes, will be lost. In that case it may be doubtful whether the Government would resign and would not rather pocket the affront, slightly modify the construction of the Cabinet, and go on without a Reform Bill at all. If the measure is a strong one, and they are beaten, then they must resign, unless (which I cannot believe) they dissolve. Dis. thinks we ought to be prepared to take office if Lord Derby is sent for. We want thirty-five men, and he asks me to consider whether we can get them. His idea is to offer Cabinet office to Lowe and Horsman, and he asks me to sound Lowe as to his probable willingness to join. He will himself sound Horsman, to whom he offered office in 1859.

Dined with T. H. Farrer, and asked him about Lowe. He says L. does not think the present Government can stand; that he has no dislike for Dis., but a good deal of contempt for him; that he has a supreme contempt for Horsman; and, finally, that he is essentially a Radical, except upon the question of the franchise. There may be a temporary alliance between L. and the Conservatives, but they cannot permanently act together on Church questions and the like. Farrer says there is an idea of a medium Ministry, of which either the Duke of Somerset or Lord Stanley might be at the head.

Feb. 4.—Called on Dis., and had a long talk. Told him —'s view of Lowe's dispositions, and mentioned my own doubts as to the prudence of making any overtures to either L. or H. until at all events the Government have shown their hand. On the one hand, I don't think these two have any following; on the other hand, I think they would alarm many of our Church supporters. The Cabinet of 1859, with L. and H. substituted for Walpole and Henley, would never do. Dis. said he should certainly make a place for Walpole. He said he was anxious for L. to join us, and he did not believe it would be distasteful to Pakington. I strongly urged him to make no overtures to L. without ascertaining the feeling of his own

colleagues, and particularly Pakington's. I said I thought if the Liberal party broke up on the Reform question we might gain more strength and incur less danger by addressing ourselves to some of the old Whigs than by taking in L. and H. I instanced Hastings Russell as a man to be approached in the event of the Government breaking up in such a manner as to put Lord Russell out of the field. Dis. thought this not impossible, and referred to the state of Lord Russell's health as rendering it probable that he might retire if the Reform Bill broke down. He also speculated on what might happen should Lord R. die, and thought the Queen would in that case let W. E. G. try to reconstruct the Government.

I told Dis. that I thought the chief question for us to consider was the future position of the party when the Reform hitch should have been got over. The question of the relation of Church and State will probably become the most important with which we shall have to deal. We must endeavour to maintain the Establishment without unduly subjecting the Church to the State. This will be difficult under any circumstances, but especially so if the Government we form does not command the confidence of Churchmen. Already some of the High Churchmen are so alarmed at the danger of Erastianism that they are for a free Church, and they look to W. E. G. as their leader to that result. If we compose our Cabinet of men who have so little of their confidence as Stanley, Lowe, and Horsman, the breach may be precipitated, and men like myself may be forced to join the free Church party as the lesser evil. I told him of my correspondence and conversations with W. E. G. in the autumn, and of my general disposition towards him, as well as of the part I had taken in the Oxford contest. Ultimately he agreed that it would be best to wait before taking further steps. In speaking of Stanley, he said he had told him (S.) in the autumn that he (Dis.) looked upon a reconstruction of our party as probable; that he thought Lord D. would not again take office; that he felt that the party would not act under himself; that he was prepared to give up the lead, and felt "old enough to amuse himself below the

gangway"; and that S. ought to be prepared to form a Government if called on. He said S. was horrified at the idea, declared that he was willing to act under Dis., and would take the Foreign Office if desired, but would not take the Government himself. Dis. thinks the Liberals greatly mistaken in their idea that S. would act with them, and considers him to be now very Conservative, only hesitating on the question of Church rates. Dis. said he understood that the idea of legislation on the Ritual question was abandoned.

He said the Queen liked W. E. G., and praised him as being "more serious" than some others—probably than Lord Palmerston. He said the idea of laying the robes on the throne had been given up.

Dined with A. Hobhouse, who told me he had met Lowe and E. Cardwell at C. Cardwell's yesterday. Lowe said of Bright's breeches difficulty, "The Speaker could set that right in a minute by inviting Bright's *sans-culotte* friends!" Cardwell was solemn over the Fenians. It was remarkable that with an organised agitation and great exertions the conspirators had not succeeded in getting a single respectable man to join them. "Ah, it's just the same here," says Lowe; "the Government have been trying to get up a Reform agitation, and can't get a single respectable man to join."

Feb. 5.—Dined with Dis. Party of eighteen. Lord Burghley, Lord Hamilton, Lord Stanley, Taylor, Jolliffe, Colonel Lowther (now father of the House of Commons), Sir E. B. Lytton, Sir W. Heathcote, Sir J. Trollope, Mr Wyndham, E. Duncombe, Sir W. Wynn, J. Manners, Cranborne, General Peel, Pakington. Queen's Speech read after dinner. Concluding paragraph received with a burst of laughter. It looks like a break-up of the Government. Stanley reports that Sir C. Wood has resigned. Dis. very cordial. Drove home with Cranborne, who quite agrees in deprecating the junction with Lowe and Horsman, thinks it would never do for Dis. to resign, but that "somebody else" might do so with advantage. Dis.'s comment on the Queen's Speech was that it convicted the world of great injustice to Lord Palmerston,

who, it would now seem, was probably the most ardent reformer in his Cabinet. By the by, it is curious that no allusion is made in the Speech to Lord Palmerston's death. Taylor told us that in discussing the question of pairs, Brand had said he had carefully analysed their own side, and found only five Palmerstonians! This is quite the living dog and dead lion.

Feb. 6.—Adderley mentioned that some careful inquiries had been made in certain boroughs, from which it appeared that 26 per cent of the present £10 householders were of the artisan class, and that the extension of the suffrage to £6 householders would give the artisans 78 per cent. He says this was mentioned before Sir C. Wood, and that Wood said the Government information goes beyond that. It seems to be, though, that Wood is much opposed to the Reform Bill: he is reported to have said, "I am afraid I shall end my political life in opposition to my old political friends." Lord Grey, by the by, spoke on the Address this evening from the Opposition benches. Lowe said to Adderley to-day, "If you stand firm to your guns and oppose the bill, I will undertake to bring you men enough to give you a majority of fifty against it." A. said, "What bill do you mean?" L. said, "Any bill that lowers the borough franchise by one sixpence."

Went to see the opening, and waited as near the door of the House of Lords as we were allowed to go till the Speaker passed, so that I had a good view of the House from the time the doors were opened till Black Rod and Speaker returned. The Queen sat perfectly motionless, in black, with a Marie Stuart cap and long white flaps, the blue ribbon of the Garter, a good many diamonds, and the scarlet robes over the arm of the throne. It is supposed they were the Prince Consort's. The rest of the House was crowded, and very brilliant in colour. It was a very picturesque sight. When the Speaker came, we had a regular fight to follow him, and some crowded him so as to catch his gown and compel him to stop for some time to disengage himself. The Chancellor read the Speech, of which we couldn't hear a word. Ninety-two

peeresses had sent to claim their places ; there have never been thirty on any former occasion.

Mr Graham, seconder of the Address, spoke remarkably well this evening. So did ———. Dis. said, "If he had only a single ray of common-sense he would be a leading man." The Government were very roughly handled for their cattle plague blundering, and no one defended them, though Leslie made a sort of apology for them. Lowe's speech was very severe. W. E. G. tried to induce me to say something for them, but I didn't see why I should. I could only have said I thought them very wrong not to call Parliament together earlier.

Feb. 7.—Schools Commission. Examined Mr Hill and V. C. Page Wood. Mr Erle told us of a charitable bequest of £300 a-year for the dissemination among the poor of the testator's moral and religious opinions, to be intrusted to some man who had *failed* in literature.

Feb. 17 (Saturday).—House met to-day to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act for Ireland until September. The bill was passed through all its stages and sent up to the House of Lords before five o'clock. The information received by the Government appears to have grown rapidly more alarming; and the presence of a large number (about 500) of the Irish-American officers, trained in the American Civil War, and the attempts to seduce the troops, are serious causes for uneasiness. Since the earlier arrests, the Fenians have learnt prudence, and never carry written documents that could implicate them: it is therefore exceedingly difficult to deal with them under the ordinary law, even though their persons are perfectly known. Bright made a remarkably eloquent, but mischievous, and, except for mischief, aimless speech. Roebuck answered him well after the Roebuck fashion. Horsman spoke very indifferently; he can do nothing without preparation. J. S. Mill spoke: it was the first time I had heard him, as I have been absent for a week on account of poor ———'s death, but he has been speaking constantly on the cattle plague, and has acquired the nickname of the Windmill. His speech to-day was very ineffective both in manner and matter. The great

Alderman Dillon (imprisoned for the rebellion of 1848) made a miserable speech, Sir John Gray (another of the same band) a fluent but rather vulgar one, the O'Donoghue a good one as usual, with some smart cuts at the vacillation of the Government. Whalley providentially could not get a hearing. W. E. G. wound up the debate with a good and telling speech, of which the end ought to have been shorter.

Going down to the House, I met H. Corry, who thought matters serious. He said nearly the whole of Ireland was disaffected except the upper ten thousand. He thought it not unlikely that the Fenians might modify their present programme, so as to gain the support of the priests and many others who now held aloof from them. He was very distrustful of the Constabulary and even of the Roman Catholic soldiers; but then he is anti-Roman to the core. He said the Landed Estates Court was almost shut up in consequence of the distrust occasioned by the Fenians, and that trustees were refusing to advance money on Irish mortgages. The value of land has fallen 6 or 7 per cent. He said it was reported that the American Fenians were remitting large sums through ———, and that ——— had informed the Government, and that this had hastened their action.

Dis. told me this evening at the House of Commons that he heard on good authority that the majority of the Cabinet were for dropping the Reform Bill, but that Lord R. and W. E. G. were determined to go on with it immediately, and that W. E. G. had said, in answer to a suggestion that he should let the second reading wait till after the Budget, that he did not want to run the risk of bringing in a Budget for other men to pass.

There is talk of a petition against Goschen as being an alien. This originates in a petition having been threatened against Grant of Kidderminster on that ground. Our friends said if that petition was proceeded with they would present one against Goschen.

Feb. 20.—T. H. F. tells me he hears the Cabinet Committee on the Reform Bill consists of Lord R., W. E. G., Milner Gibson, C. Villiers, and one other whose name

he didn't know. Dis. says C. Villiers is very Conservative.

Mr Clay's bill for giving a vote to every man who can read, write, and work the four rules, brought out the members of the "Third Party" to-night. They were obviously acting in concert. Their support of Clay was given *diminuendo*. Gregory (the least important) supported him decidedly; Elcho praised and blamed alternately, and said he only preferred his bill to the supposed Government measure; Horsman said nothing in support of Clay, and confined himself to an amusing attack on the Government. Lowe (the most important) did not speak at all, though his friends were in constant communication with him. He was evidently waiting to reply on W. E. G., had the latter been weak enough to enter into the discussion. Noel says the Third Party meet constantly at Elcho's house; that they number, or profess to number, about fifty followers; that they would join us, but will not accept Dis. as leader. He is anxious that communication should be opened with them, and suggests Jolliffe as a good negotiator. He suggested Stanley, Cranborne, or General Peel as a possible leader; but agreed that the first would not command the confidence of Churchmen, and that Cranborne was too young. He is under the impression that Dis. would serve under Peel. This I doubt.

Long talk with F. Kelly about the malt-tax agitation. He agrees to keep matters quiet till the Reform Bill is in print, when we shall see how parties are likely to shape themselves. He agreed that it would be better for us, if we are to come into office, to have the question debated and settled before we do so, rather than have to offend our agricultural friends by resisting it when in office. I pointed out to him that W. E. G. would probably not allow us this advantage: he would either concede something, and so gain popularity, or move the previous question, and so leave the matter open for us to deal with on our responsibility. Possibly we may settle this troublesome question by a beer-duty, but it will not be easy to do so.

Feb. 21.—Examined the Duke of Cambridge to-day before the Schools Inquiry Commission. He is President of Christ's Hospital. He gave his evidence very clearly and well, and argued his points ably. He was extremely Conservative in all that relates to the school, and defended the dress warmly. The yellow petticoat has, however, been given up, and a flannel waistcoat substituted. There is a talk of the new Middle-Class College buying the Charterhouse.

Dined at Grillion's—Lord Stanhope, Lord Percy, Lord Carnarvon, R. Palmer, Adderley, Duke of Cleveland, and Sir J. B. East. Lord Percy mentioned, with reference to the great increase in the value of land in the metropolitan counties, that an estate in Surrey was offered five years ago for £100,000 and the highest offer was £90,000, which was refused: it has now been sold for £270,000. Lord Carnarvon said a solicitor had told him that a man who had been a clerk in Liverpool at £150 salary two or three years ago, had come to him saying that he had made £700,000 in the cotton speculations, and wanted to buy an estate. The solicitor mentioned some properties for sale, but they did not suit the purchaser, who said he wanted a house in perfect condition, furnished, curtains up, ready to go into at once, and if possible one that had belonged to an old county family, and which would entitle him to represent the county!

The number of members petitioned against is seventy, of whom forty-eight are Liberals and twenty-two Conservatives.

Feb. 22.—Had conversations at the House of Commons this evening with Dis. and with Jolliffe. Dis. told me he heard that the Reform Bill was to be brought in next week. He thought the Third Party had come out very badly on Tuesday. It made him think with dismay of having such empty fellows in the Cabinet. Lowe, he understood, was much disgusted at the figure they had cut. The only good speech of the night, he thought, was Clay's. I told him of Noel's wish for communications to be opened with the party, and we again discussed the point, and he advised me to confer with Jolliffe. I took Jolliffe into the back-

room, and he said he had come down on purpose to talk to me, and to tell me all he knew. He said he went to Lord Derby after the elections, and told him he considered we were now in the same position in the House of Commons as when Lord D. took office in 1858 with a majority of sixty against him. (Lord D.: "And I never mean to put myself in that position again.") "But there is this difference, that there is now a Third Party, organised to some extent, and claiming to have about forty followers." Lord D. inquired what they wanted. Jolliffe said, "They won't serve under you; they don't like the name of Derbyite; they are ready to act with us, I believe, and they are straining every nerve to get hold of Stanley." Lord D., "Ah! they think if they get him they can float, but I don't think they will get him; and if they do, they won't float." Jolliffe then urged Lord D. to call his friends together, if only as a matter of compliment. Lord D. thought it would only expose our weakness to do so. He said he was not disposed to stand in the way of any arrangement that might be feasible, and that he knew Dis. would also waive any claims of his own for the same purpose. I then told Jolliffe of my conversations with Dis., and of his willingness to resign the lead and go below the gangway; but that I did not think he would serve under any one else. Jolliffe said the Third Party were looking to Stanley as leader, and would act with Dis. in any other capacity. They said, "Lord Derby might be disposed to sacrifice himself for the advantage of his country." . . . Jolliffe agreed that Stanley would not command the confidence of the party. As for General Peel, he said, "If any one were to propose the lead to him, he would only laugh at it." On the whole, he agreed with me in thinking that there was no use, or rather that it would be better not to make overtures to the Third Party at present. He ended by saying that he thought it might not be a bad plan to let the Government pass a moderate Reform Bill, and so get rid of the question,—a view which Dis. received, when I told him our conversation, with the deepest contempt, considering that such a course would

seat the Whigs for a lifetime. Matters are now very difficult. I suggested that Dis. might take the Foreign Office himself. "But what would you do for a leader?" I said I thought Mr Canning had led the House of Commons as Foreign Secretary. He said, "Ah! but things have wholly changed since that time: the work of the Foreign Office has more than trebled, and the House of Commons is quite a different place. The leader ought to be able to speak with some knowledge and reflection upon every subject; and how can the Foreign Secretary, with an enormous mass of very absorbing work, with red boxes constantly coming to interrupt him, and with his mind engaged on distant politics, be ready to do that?" As regards our friends of the Third Party, I again advised delay. The great point to gain would be to get some of the great Whig families—Lord Lansdowne, Lord Westminster, D. Cleveland, Hastings Russell, &c. It is better to approach the Third Party through them than through the Third Party. We must have Lowe; but the others are worth very little, and it would be far better not to recognise their organisation. The Grosvenors seem from all accounts very likely to be friendly to us, and Lord Lansdowne would probably join us. Dis. said he had thought of offering him the Paris Embassy. I said I would rather see him in the Cabinet as Privy Seal or the like.

Feb. 24.—W. J. F. told me that Lord Gosford's agent told him of a curious effect of the disarming in Ireland. Many of Lord G.'s tenants are now bringing in their arrears of rent, because they say there is no use in keeping back the money now; the Fenians will come and take it from them, now they have lost their arms. One miserable fellow, who occupies a cabin like a pigsty, brought £100 to the agent, and begged him to take care of it for him.

Dined with Fitzwilliam Dick, Lord Hawarden, R. Montague, Cole, Corry, Colonel Somerset, Guinness, W. E. Duncombe, Beach, Sir J. Fergusson, Ion Hamilton, Leader, Rolt, Sir B. Bridges, and Sir J. Walsh. Hawarden told me one of his Protestant tenants had asked him for a licence to keep his gun. "Why do you want your gun?"

"Well, I'd feel cold without it." Hawarden said, "I think you'd be better without it." "Well, perhaps I should; for the Fenians might catch one of my children, and threaten to murder him if I didn't give up my gun to them." Hawarden told me that all the peasantry in Tipperary had maps or indexes to the property formerly held by their ancestors, and that some years ago when Lord Lismore rebuilt Shanbally Castle on a different site, a fight took place in Clogheen between the aboriginal claimant of the townland on which the castle had formerly stood and the claimant of that to which it had been removed, as to their respective rights; the former contending that his claim to the castle still held good, and followed it to the neighbouring townland. The two disputants were brought before Lord Lismore for fighting, and the cause of quarrel was then explained to him, somewhat to his surprise, we may suppose.

Feb. 28.—The air has been full of rumours of political changes for some days past, and the 'Times' has given expression to them to-day, only to be contradicted by the 'Globe' this evening. Dis. told me on Monday that he heard that the Cabinet on Saturday broke up in admired disorder, three members—the Duke of Somerset, Lord Clarendon, and Lord de Grey (?)—having left the room in disgust. The second bill, for the redistribution of seats, is said to have been given up. The general impression is, that the Government are in a very critical position. Lord Russell's health is again said to be unsatisfactory. —, with whom I had some talk to-day, favoured the idea of a Government being formed on the principle of deferring a Reform Bill, and thought it might very well be put off for ten years. He saw no difficulties of a political character in the way of a fusion of parties; and thought that, as everybody was agreed that the Irish Church could not be touched, Church questions would present no obstacle. He thought the great difficulty would be W. E. G., who would never rest content without office.

March 1.—W. E. G. announced the Reform Bill for the 12th, in words generally supposed to convey that it would

not deal with the redistribution of seats. The notice was very coldly received.

March 2.—Dis. told me to-night that General Peel had come to him for the purpose of speaking of the rumours that Lord D. was to give up the lead of the party to Stanley, and had told him that if S. was to be leader he (General P.) must make his bow to the party and retire. Dis. told him that Lord D. had no idea of retiring. Meanwhile, here is the General's *pronunciamiento*.

Saw Cairns, who has only just returned from Italy, and has heard nothing of recent gossip. He talked a good deal of possible combinations, and thinks a party might be formed under the Duke of Somerset, with General Peel to lead the House of Commons; Lord Derby to stand aloof, as he probably would not serve under any one; and Dis. either to stand aloof or to take some office like the Duchy of Lancaster, *not* the Foreign Office. He thought Cardwell and Palmer would join such an administration, and that we ought to get the latter either as Attorney-General or as Chancellor. I asked him what office General P. could hold,—Chancellor of Exchequer? He said, No. He thought he might be President of the Council. He could not well lead as Secretary for War.

Gregory's motion, praying her Majesty to use her influence with foreign Powers to abolish the capture of private property at sea, came on to-night. I could not stay to hear it out. General Peel whispered to me that the Government might have easily answered it by saying that her Majesty has no influence whatever with a single foreign Power! Pretty true.

An Irishman has written to me suggesting that a Reform Bill should be passed giving tenants a number of votes proportioned to the length of their leases, of which their landlords should dispose of a certain number—*e.g.*, a tenant with a twenty years' lease to have three votes, of which his landlord should dispose of one; a tenant with a forty years' lease to have six votes, and his landlord to dispose of two of them.

March 3.—Dined with Miss Stanley to meet Lord and Lady Russell. The Dean of Westminster, Lord Houghton,

Sir R. Phillimore, and Wm. Fremantle were the only other gentlemen there. Lord R. seemed very much aged, and was (*pace tanti viri*) twaddling.¹ He talked a little of his visit to Italy in 1814, and of his interview with Napoleon at Elba, but said nothing worth noting. Napoleon asked him rather eagerly, what the state of feeling was in France, and said, "L'armée, était-elle contente?" The news of Josephine's death arrived while he was there, and Napoleon said, "She was very extravagant in lace."

Sir Robert Phillimore talked to me of W. E. G.'s position; thought he was not likely to become very Radical, that he was anxious to found a family, and would like his son to be a peer. In Church matters he thought he would "give up everything but dogma." The Irish Church speech last session was, he says, made deliberately in order to show his Oxford constituents that they must not look on him as a supporter of the Establishment.

March 7. — Dinner-party: Salisburys, Stanhopes, Chelmsfords, Neville Grenville, Lyttelton, Stanley, Hesketh Palk, T. H. F., Banks Stanhope, G. S. Lefevre.

Lady — said Cardwell was very unhappy at being suspected of having given the 'Times' the information as to Lord Russell's retirement. Cardwell, she said, was much dissatisfied with his position, and very anxious to escape from it. A fusion must soon take place. I asked, Under whom? Lady — said, Under W. E. G. That Lord Derby would fail to form a Ministry; that the Queen would send for W. E. G., of whom she is very fond; and that he would address himself to the Conservatives. "He will take General Peel, and Stanley, and yourself; I don't know whether he will take Cranborne. He will take Cardwell and Lowe; that will do for the House of Commons. Then for the Lords he will take the Duke of Argyll, Lord de Grey, and Lord Hartington." (Query, Did this mean that Hartington was to be called up?) "The difficulty is as to the Foreign Office." I said,

¹ Some one, hearing of Lord Russell's death, spoke of him as "poor Lord Russell." "Why do you call him 'poor'?" said Sir Stafford; "he had the chance to do a great work, and he did it."

as to myself, "I am bound to Dis." Lady — said, "Of course nothing would be done without the full assent of both our leaders." I said, "I don't think the Conservatives would accept W. E. G. as their leader, and I don't see that he is drawing towards them. Certainly his conduct to-day (on the Church Rate Bill) doesn't look like it." As to the Foreign Office, I suggested Stanley. Lady — said, "No; that won't do." I said I had looked to a coalition with the Whigs, and had thought of Hastings Russell. Lady — said, "No; you must put that quite out of your head: he is Liberalising more and more, and has just asked Bright to dinner."

March 8.—General meeting of the party at Lord Salisbury's. A reporter who was present was first turned out. Lord D. then made a capital speech, saying with regard to the Reform Bill that he advised us to say as little as possible on its introduction, only to insist on having the whole plan of the Government laid before us before we would consider any part of it. His speech was chiefly on the Oaths Bill, and was nearly identical with what Dis. afterwards said in the House of Commons, including the (erroneous) illustration of the Roman Catholic (?) bigamist. He was warmly cheered. This is the first party meeting I remember at which no one but Lord D. has spoken, and it has been by far the most successful, for it led to only five men voting with Newdegate against the bill. Moreover, the indirect effect has been great, as the meeting has shown that Lord D. has not retired from the lead of the party, and the impression is that the meeting was held to discuss the Reform question. Lowe sent Walpole a very urgent note, written under the apprehension that we were going to declare ourselves in favour of a measure of Reform, urging that there was a statute of limitations as to our obligations, and arguing that Dis. ought to take office. This is a sign that the Third Party are abating their pretensions.

Talked over the situation with Heathcote, who thought the party would not follow W. E. G.

Told Dis. of Lady —'s views, which he treated as the "dreams of princesses in fairyland," and quite unpractical.

"Lady — wants Stanley to take a leading place. It won't do. W. E. G. and S. sound very well. One is a man of transcendent ability; the other, though not of transcendent ability, has considerable power. But neither of them can deal with men. S. is a mere child in such matters. The other, though more experienced, is too impetuous and wanting in judgment to succeed as a leader." Dis. referred again to General Peel's visit to him, and said Peel had entirely repudiated the notion of becoming a leader himself. He was quite ready to act with Dis., "though we were not friends at one time." This was an allusion to a challenge which Dis. says General Peel sent him a good many years ago, in consequence of one of his speeches about Sir Robert. Dis. put the matter into Lord G. Bentinck's hands, and Peel was shown that he was in the wrong, and had to apologise. "The paper is somewhere in my family archives." Dis. returned to the view that the only thing to be done was to keep Lord D. up to taking office.

Talked over matters with Cranborne, who ridiculed the idea of acting with W. E. G., or under any one but Dis. He was strongly against Malmesbury, and thought Stanley ought to be Foreign Secretary.

Elcho told Cranborne that Lord Grosvenor was trying to get up a meeting of moderate Whigs against the Reform Bill. Dis. thinks this very important. He says Lord D. will now do nearly as he is told, and that he has promised to communicate with Lord Westminster and Lord Lansdowne.

March 14.—Dined with Cardwell. Forster was there, and talked freely of the Reform Bill, with which he said he was agreeably disappointed. He had expected to be obliged to leave the Government when it should be announced, but now thought the £7 franchise would be accepted by the Liberals as a compromise. He thought Lowe's and Horsman's violent speeches would reconcile the Liberals to this high figure, by showing them that it was a measure of sufficient importance to cause a panic, and that it might be taken as a settlement for our lifetime. He considered that a dissolution would be quite neces-

sary before we could deal with the redistribution of seats. Ultimately he had no doubt that the Conservatives would be all the stronger for the passing of the bill, as it would make the Radicals feel strong enough to set up for themselves, and then the Whigs would join the Tories.

March 16.—Meeting at Lord Salisbury's. Lord D. unable to attend, being laid up with gout. Dis. made a capital speech, reciting the history of the Reform Bills since 1852; throwing all the blame of the present agitation upon W. E. G.; objecting principally to the county franchise proposed in this bill,—especially the admission of copyholders and leaseholders in boroughs to vote for the counties,—and still more to the fragmentary character of the measure. He said it was obviously our duty unanimously to oppose the bill on the second reading, but that we must leave it to our leaders to decide in what form the opposition had better be made, having reference especially to the feelings and dispositions of our friends on the other side. The meeting was most cordial and unanimous.

It is curious that at least one copy of the new bill has come out with "six" instead of "seven" pounds for the qualification. They must have meant to propose six pounds, and been frightened out of it at the very last moment.

March 23.—House adjourned for the Easter holidays. What will happen when we meet again?

Lord Grosvenor's amendment seems greatly to have disconcerted the Government. It is said that great pressure was put on him to prevent his giving notice of it; but that he replied to those who urged him on the subject that he had fully considered the question with his father, and was now determined to abide the issue. The Government made their final effort this evening, and, as far as one can judge, they have failed. It was announced that W. E. G. would make an important statement on moving the adjournment, and the House was very full, many peers, especially members of the Cabinet, being under the gallery. W. E. G.'s statement of the intention of the Government was coldly received, the only cheers

coming from the Radicals below the gangway. He was evidently bent on bullying Grosvenor out of his motion, making a bridge for him to retreat over by promising to state the views of the Government upon redistribution and other questions "in the shape of bills" after the second reading of the Franchise Bill should have been carried. His declaration that the Government would regard Grosvenor's amendment as a vote of want of confidence was a plagiarism from Lord Palmerston on Walpole's amendment upon Stansfeld's motion in 1864; but Grosvenor seems to have more pluck than Walpole, and stood gallantly to his guns, speaking, either designedly or by accident, from our side of the House. I should think he did it designedly. — was obviously acting in concert with the Government, as a sort of decoy-duck to draw off some of the Grosvenor party. He seems to have succeeded with Oliphant; though perhaps Oliphant was never to be relied on. So far as we can learn, he has not succeeded with many others. Beaumont spoke out more decidedly against the Government after the notice than he has ever done before, and the impression seems to be that they must be beaten.

Dis. says he has prepared Lord D. for a junction with Lowe; but he is altogether puzzled by Lowe's conduct in ostentatiously placing himself in opposition to us upon Church questions. "Is it a want of practical sense, or is it from some *arrière pensée*?" I suggested that Lowe was perhaps looking to a Ministry of the future, which should stand on a middle-class basis, on principles of pure reason, and in an attitude very unfriendly to the Church. His dislike of Reform arises much from his fear of letting in the class which will be swayed by passion rather than by reason. He might support us, or even join us for a time, as a means of getting rid of the Reform question; but ultimately he would blow us up on Church questions. Dis. thought that this was too long a game for a man of his age to play; Lowe was nearer sixty than fifty, and it could hardly suit him. Upon questions like the Oxford Tests Bill, he thought Lowe might take his own line without

difficulty: they were questions involving principles, but not in the nature of questions of State policy; but as to the Irish Church the case was different,—that was a question of State policy. Stanley, for instance, might go against us on the Tests question, but he would not go against the Irish Church.

In talking over W. E. G. to-night, Dis. advanced the theory that it was a great advantage to a leader of the House of Commons that he should be—not unable, but unwilling to speak. It is certainly a position in which silence is often golden. W. E. G.'s second speech to-night, besides being quite out of order, was very injudicious.

March 24.—Had some talk with X. at the Carlton. He had seen Lord Lichfield and Lord Spencer, and found them hearty; but had done nothing since the announcement of Grosvenor's amendment, considering that the matter had passed into other hands. I asked what he thought of Lowe's conduct on the Church questions. He couldn't understand it, but said he should ask him. He said, "Lowe always has the worst opinion of everybody's motives, and never gives any one credit for acting from high principle. This looks as if he acted from interested motives himself."

March 25.—Walked with Lord Carnarvon in Kensington Gardens. He was very full of speculations, and rather disturbed with doubts as to the possibility of finding room for everybody in a fusionist Cabinet. I told him I should myself decline any subordinate office under a Government such as was likely to be formed, and should prefer to take my seat on the back bench with Henley and Heathcote, and watch the turn of events. He said he too had quite made up his mind not to take a subordinate office under any Government. He agreed that if Lowe commits himself on the Irish Church question, it will give a lever for the enemy to use in breaking up a fusionist Cabinet of which he might form a part. We talked a good deal of the Reform question, and of the Irish Church. As to the former, it would probably be well for us hereafter to try to settle it, but we ought

not to attempt to do so till we had a really strong Government capable of carrying what they might propose. We thought we should disfranchise the corrupt boroughs, give more seats to the northern towns, and form smaller divisions of counties, as rural as possible in their character. We thought fancy franchises a mistake; and we thought we might stand on the present limit of the borough franchise, though we should not object to a reduction. As to the Irish Church, Carnarvon thought it a great difficulty. I pointed out to him, that so far as the Irish were concerned, it was rather a symptom of what they thought an evil than the evil itself. What they regard as the real grievance is, that whereas the great majority of the population are Roman Catholics, such a large proportion of the soil belongs to Protestants. This is an uncomfortable, but, I suspect, a true view of the case. It shows how Fenianism might easily be worked into the standing web of Irish discontent. I do not as yet see how we ought to deal with the Irish Education question in its various branches. Ought we to maintain the system of mixed education, and support the Queen's Colleges in their integrity, trusting to the gradual undermining of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church? or ought we to deal with these questions on the principle of denominational education, such as we wish to give effect to in England? If Mr Whittle's recent pamphlet is a fair exposition of the feeling of a large body of the educated Roman Catholic laity, it would seem that we ought to hold firm to the mixed system. Yet it appears unjust to deny to the Roman Catholic Church what so many of us claim for our own.

Carnarvon has quite come round to the idea that Lord D. is our principal difficulty. He suggested a scheme of fusion, with the Duke of Devonshire as Prime Minister, and Dis. leader of the House of Commons. This might do, provided the Duke would take the post, and provided Lord D. had dexterity enough to bring the arrangement about; but both provisos are most problematical.

Lord Grey has written to Lord Grosvenor, highly commending his notice of motion, and saying that it is the

greatest public service any private member has rendered for many years.

June 28.—Meeting at Lord Derby's. Present, Lord D., Dis, Lord Salisbury, Lord Bath, Lord Malmesbury, Carnarvon, Lord Chelmsford, Pakington, Peel, Stanley, Manners, Cranborne, Walpole, Henley, Cairns, Adderley, Jolliffe, Trollope, Hardy, Heathcote, Naas, Taylor, and I—twenty-three—"the Grand Jury," as Lord Chelmsford said. Sir E. Lytton not there, the note not having reached him.

Lord D. read some part of the Queen's letter to him, saying . . . that she would not name any particular time for seeing him, but would leave it to him to name his own day and hour, so that he might have the opportunity of consulting his friends before seeing her. He had accordingly named this afternoon at four o'clock, and now called us together to ask first, Whether we were of opinion that he ought to attempt to form a Ministry? secondly, Whether it should be on an enlarged basis, addressing himself first to members of the outgoing Government and afterwards to independent Liberals? lastly, Whether, if these attempts failed, he should undertake to form an Administration from among his own friends? The meeting were unanimously of opinion that he ought to attempt the formation of an Administration on an enlarged basis,—and almost unanimous that if he failed in that attempt he should undertake the Government with his own friends alone. Lord Bath alone expressed himself decidedly against the latter course. He said that he did not expect that Lord D. would succeed in getting the Whigs to join him; that he thought a pure Derbyite Government could not stand; and that the Whigs would reorganise themselves in opposition, turn us out, and come back under Gladstone and Bright. He urged Lord D. to hand over the task of forming a Government to Stanley, who would, he thought, unite the Whigs with us. General Peel said, "A council of war is said never to fight: I hope that won't be the case with this council. I hope we shall fight under our old commander; but for my part, if he gives it up, I am ready to fight under my

young friend here (Stanley), or any one else, against Gladstone and the democratic party." (This is important, for Peel was very much averse from the idea of a Stanley Government some time ago.) Dis. said he thought the chances of an alliance more promising than Lord Bath did. He would not go into details now. We must be prepared to make sacrifices for a junction. He for one was prepared to make the greatest sacrifices. (This was warmly cheered.) Every one spoke in turn, and Lord D. concluded by saying that he would go down and undertake to make the attempt. He said he should probably have to call on many of us to make sacrifices—especially if the Government was formed on a broad basis. This was generally felt, and assented to cheerfully.

June 29.—Called on W. E. G., who had expressed a wish to see me. He told me he had been considering the defects in the organisation of the Board of Treasury for some time, and had intended to propose some alterations if the late Government had continued in office. His idea is to constitute a board of five members,—the First Lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, two Lords occupying the positions of the present Secretaries, and either the Vice-President of the Board of Trade or the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In addition, there should be three "assistant Lords nominated by the Lords, and not vacating their seats on appointment."

Called on Dis., and mentioned what W. E. G. had told me, adding that it might affect the arrangements for some of the offices, and might also have a bearing on my own position. I began to say that he might naturally expect me to resume my old place of Financial Secretary, when he stopped me and said that he had told Lord D. that under any circumstances, and whether there were a fusion or not, he must make a point of my having a seat in the Cabinet; that Lord D. had expressed himself very kindly towards me, but had raised difficulties in respect of others having equal claims; that he (Dis.), however, had pointed out what he considered points of distinction, and had said that he must make my admission into the Cabinet a condition of his own taking office, so that the matter was

quite settled. As to the particular office for me, of course he could say nothing yet; but he thought probably it would be the Board of Trade. He then went on to discuss the chances of a fusion, in which he does not himself believe. . . . Dis. thought we should gain little by addressing ourselves to the Adullamites in the House. Horsman would be a *mauvais coucheur*, and a troublesome colleague. Lowe's appointment would be rather too much of a challenge to the Reform party, and would look like the decided adoption of an anti-Reform policy, "while after all, perhaps, we may be the men to settle the question." But we were relieved of our difficulty by the forwardness of this party to announce that they would not take office under us.

July 1.—Received this evening Lord D.'s note offering me the Presidency of the Board of Trade and a seat in the Cabinet. Accepted.

July 6.—Went down to Windsor by special train with Lord Derby, Disraeli, Lord Chelmsford, Duke of Buckingham, Carnarvon, Malmesbury, Cranborne, General Peel, Walpole, J. Manners, Hardy, Pakington, Stanley, Duke of Montrose, Lord Abercorn, and Mowbray. Queen's carriages met us at the terminus and took us to the Castle. As we went up-stairs we met the late Ministers coming down, and shook hands with them. While we were waiting in the long room there was a sharp thunderstorm, and there was another while we were at luncheon after taking office. The slopes of the terrace looked as if there had been a fall of snow. Some thought this a bad omen for us. Dis. had a bad omen of his own as we came down; for, thinking there was a seat at the end of the saloon carriage, he sat down there, and found himself unexpectedly on the floor.

Lord D. was first sent for, and had a short audience. We were then all taken along the corridor to the door of a small room or rather closet. Lord Derby, Lord Chelmsford, and Walpole were called in; then the five new members of the Privy Council—Duke of Buckingham, Carnarvon, Cranborne, Hardy, and I—were called in together, and knelt before the Queen while we took the oath

of allegiance; then we kissed hands, rose, and took the Privy Councillor's oath standing. The Queen then named the D. of B. Lord President of the Council, and we all retired. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh were in the room. We were then called in one by one, and kissed hands on appointment to office, Lord Derby going first, then the Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretaries of State (all together), the Chancellor of the Exchequer, &c. The Seals were delivered to all these (except the Lord President). Lord Derby then had a long audience with the Queen, while we went to luncheon. Returned by special train at four o'clock.

The swearing in was much less impressive than it is said to have been formerly. After being sworn, we shook hands with each Privy Councillor present. This, in a large room with a full Council, was no doubt a more solemn undertaking than in a Council of only three members, huddled up in a tiny room, with the rest outside the door.

The Queen seemed very cheerful, but said nothing except as to one or two details of arrangement.

July 7.—Attended our first Cabinet to-day. Lord D., Dis., Duke of Buckingham, Lord Chancellor, Malmesbury, Carnarvon, Cranborne, Walpole, General Peel, Stanley, Pakington, Hardy, Manners, and myself. Not a single Scotchman or Irishman among us.

Here the diary closes, but Sir Stafford's letters to Lady Northcote contain references to the turmoil of July in Hyde Park, when the railings were broken by the crowd, when Mr Beales, M.A., achieved his reputation, and when the Home Secretary, Mr Walpole, shed some natural tears. People who were then unborn may study the circumstances in Mr Carlyle's essay, "Shooting Niagara."

On July 23, Sir Stafford writes from the House:—

We are expecting to have all our heads broken to-night, as the mob are now trying it on in Hyde Park, and perhaps if they are defeated there, they will come on here. . . . I walked

down Park Lane this morning; it is strange to see the railing entirely destroyed, or rather thrown down, and yet all the small wire fencing left untouched, and the flowers uninjured for the most part, though in some places they have been dug up and carried away. . . . The past week has been one of terrible anxiety, added to a good deal of work, and I scarcely yet feel as if the load was off one's mind, or would be for another day or two, though I hope now that things are going well. Walpole has not done altogether well, as regards manner, at all events; but he has been most unjustly attacked. People are not aware of the difficulties of the situation, or of the law of the case, and they seem to think there would have been more courage in putting other people's lives in peril than in bearing a certain amount of misconstruction and ridicule ourselves. It did at one time seem probable that we should have had to resort to very strong measures to-day, and that there would have been a serious collision and bloodshed; for that we should have been prepared if it had been necessary. But it was not for us to provoke the collision by menaces, when there was a possibility of averting it by conciliatory language; and as we have (or seem to have) carried our point by conciliation without concession, I think we may be well satisfied. However, I am still uncertain whether we are quite out of the wood.

They received "an awful warning that we are all to be annihilated by an infernal machine," at the Mansion House, but it was deferred. Twenty pounds of gunpowder were found under the Victoria Tower (Aug. 8). "I have no doubt it is Lord Russell's doing."

The session ended peacefully after all, and he went down to Liverpool to make a speech at a dinner about the Atlantic Cable:—

The dinner is to be at 6.30. I suppose I shall get through it somehow; but I feel as if I were going at a big fence with my reins nohow and my feet out of the stirrups. I have a great mass of undigested material, but shan't have got it into any kind of shape. I shall probably give deadly offence to at least half the claimants who set themselves up as the original projectors of the Cable, and very possibly I shan't please the other half. I am sure to disgust either the Canadians or the Nova Scotians about Confederation, and very likely both of them. As for President Johnson and the Republicans, I see my way very

clearly into the ditch, and doubt whether it will be worth while to try to get out of it. I wanted Stanley to take the President's health, but he declines, saying it will be difficult—as if I didn't know that. Lord Derby sends me frantic cautions to say nothing about American politics, and says he is going to send me a letter, to be read at the dinner, containing the list of honours to be awarded.

In October he went further north, to Balmoral. A brief extract about life there may be permitted:—

The life here is somewhat desultory, and indisposes one for work, though I have plenty that I ought to do. I am going out grouse-shooting with Colonel Ponsonby by-and-by, not that we shall have much chance of getting at the birds, now they have become so wild, but it will give us a walk and some good scenery. I dined with the Queen last night; there were the Queen, Prince and Princess Christian, Prince Arthur, Princess Louise, Dr Lee, Lady Ely, and myself. We got on very pleasantly, and the Queen was highly gracious. She was surprised to hear I had been here before; and her memory is so wonderful that I was surprised at her having forgotten it. I sat next to the Princess, and liked her very much. I had a little talk with Prince Arthur after dinner, and liked him. He is about the same age as Jack, and a nice spirited boy, wild about shooting, and causing Princess Christian great alarm for the safety of her husband, with whom he is to go out to-day. There has been a shocking accident at Mar Lodge; one of the keepers has shot himself, out deer-stalking. He seems to have been striking at a wounded deer with the butt-end of his rifle, the rifle being loaded, and the shock caused it to go off into his chest. It seems incomprehensible that a keeper should do such a thing. The Queen is very much grieved about it. The interest she takes in all her neighbours, and in everything about here, is very great.

We had a great discussion on Walter Scott, Tennyson, &c., last night. The Queen particularly delights in "In Memoriam." . . . She is a great Tennysonian.

The other letters to Lady Iddesleigh and to Mr Disraeli, from Balmoral, are either of a purely private nature, or deal with questions of administration no longer interesting.

It is a very unlucky thing that Sir Stafford did not keep up his diary through the strange events of 1867, and

especially at the moment of Lord Cranborne's secession, with General Peel and Lord Carnarvon, from Lord Derby's Government. His own attitude on the question which divided the Cabinet, the question of Reform, was merely and simply that of his chiefs. He did not want to lower the franchise, any more than they desired it. But he was no more inclined than they to divorce the Conservative party from the current of affairs, and with the party he took that leap into the dark, the dark which was not so Egyptian but that any one might have perceived our present through it, and even somewhat of our future. He let the great current take him to the sea, the sea in which we are tossed about to-day. Documents are wanting, then, as to any private struggle of mind through which he may have passed. It is only plain that he stuck to Mr Disraeli. A letter of February 29, 1867, clearly refers to some momentous conversation with that leader, a letter in which he observes that he is "penitent for the awkward way in which I stumbled over what I meant or wished to say when I left you this morning. Pretty speeches don't come readily, when one really means to say a great deal. . . . I can assure you that I look back upon our nine years' friendship with lively feelings of satisfaction and gratitude, and forward with confident hope that we have got many such years before us." And he signs himself, "Your attached and affectionate, S. H. N."¹ On March 1 there is just a hint, in a note of one line, about an attempt to prevent the disruption of the Cabinet: "I have spent an hour with our friend: he is much distressed, but, I fear, immovable." On March 2 came a note from Mr Disraeli, offering, in Lord Derby's name, the place of Secretary for India: "Send your answer to him, and at once." The answer, of course, was "Yes," and Sir Stafford entered at once on the great office, which he held so worthily in critical times. As to Reform, he had gone with the stream of history. His habit-

¹ Though it has nothing to do with the case, I cannot help quoting a letter of Mr Disraeli's, whose butler had assured Sir Stafford that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not see him. "My dinner, a tapioca pudding, should not have interfered, but my butler is a pompous booby."

ual and almost proverbial hopefulness enabled him to see a happy future for England and our enfranchised working class, especially as the influence of the Conservative party "has been used almost always on the side of labour and of the working man."¹

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN SECRETARYSHIP.

WHEN Sir Stafford Northcote became Secretary of State for India, he undertook a task of which the labour and difficulty may be faintly appreciated by his biographer. Whoever has been suddenly thrust into the jungle of despatches, letters, minutes, and reports, about matters altogether foreign and mysterious to him, about the countless affairs of our gigantic and heterogeneous oriental dependency, can understand the troubles of the new Indian Secretary of State. When Sir Stafford took office, he had no special knowledge of Eastern matters, and his time was devoured by the claims of home politics, by the labours of the Conservative party in its uncomfortable tenure of precarious office. In the letters of the year, we find Sir Stafford frequently stating that he has scarce any leisure for his vast and complicated task. Yet he tackled his business with his usual clear-headedness, he made himself acquainted almost at once with the ins and outs, the rights and wrongs of many serious and obscure questions, and in this new office, as always, it was his business to keep throwing oil on troubled waters, and smoothing the asperities of men animated by the most contending interests. To the student who comes fresh to these topics, the marvel is that Indian government goes on at all, and that a single English statesman can acquire, in the brief and anxious time of office which party Government allots

¹ Speech at Bristol, November 5, 1867.

to him, the necessary amount of knowledge, and can bestow the necessary amount of attention.

Probably one cannot give a better account of Sir Stafford's position than he gave to Parliament himself when introducing the "Government of India Act Amendment Bill" (April 23, 1868). "We have endeavoured to govern India by means of an executive machinery in India, subject to a controlling machinery in England." At the centre of that controlling machinery in England sat Sir Stafford, as the Indian Secretary of State in Council. The Council consists, or then consisted, of fifteen men, most of whom had served in India. Half are elected, half nominated by the Crown: they hold their offices for life; they advise, and to a certain extent control the Secretary of State. The difficulties of the position are manifest. The world has its own opinion of what old Anglo-Indians are like, and, to use language which would not have been parliamentary twenty years ago, they are apt to be considered fogies. "I believe that, in some quarters," said Sir Stafford, "... an impression prevails that the Council are more or less of a useless, and even of an obstructive character, ... not only an ungenerous but a very untruthful account of the matter. ... Combined with the amount of work they do as departmental officers, they afford most valuable assistance as advisers to the Secretary of State." That unenvied official has commonly no personal knowledge of India to start with, yet "he is called upon to superintend and control the governors of an enormous empire at the other side of the world, upon thousands of details, embracing every class of business. He is at once charged with military duties, with financial duties, with the duties of home administration, with foreign affairs, with judicial affairs, with the management of great railways, and other public works." Sir Stafford did not add, that he had also, as it were, "to fight with beasts," in the shape of persons who wanted tickets for the Sultan's ball, with persons who desired decorations, and were eager that the proverbial "Dowb" should be remembered; that he had to keep the peace between peppery generals and governors, labouring under

the heat of the weather and the ravages of a dilapidated liver. Such are the duties of an Indian Secretary of State, and if he had not his Council to instruct him, his condition would be all the more ungracious. But Sir Stafford always declined to shun responsibility under the shield of his Council. In a private letter, he remarks that he will not play Adam to their Eve, and say "the Council thou gavest to be with me tempted me." In more dignified language he told the House of Commons that an Indian Secretary "may shelter himself, by pleading that it is not he but the Council that is responsible. But, in the first place, this is not strictly true." Without anticipating the future by following this discourse any farther here, I quote so much of it that the reader may learn, from Sir Stafford's own words, something of what were the duties and sorrows of the Indian Secretary.

The particular questions with which Sir Stafford had to cope were many and serious. Fortunately for him, Lord Lawrence was then Viceroy; a personal acquaintance, Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, was at Bombay; in Madras was Lord Napier.¹ With all of them, despite the clash of provincial and personal interests and the contention of opinion, Sir Stafford maintained most friendly intercourse. The chief points which continually demanded his attention were in the long-run financial, and with finance he was at home. The dreadful famine in Orissa (1865-66), wherein an uncounted multitude of people perished, had shaken our confidence in our own administration, and remains a horror and a shame in the memory. To provide against the recurrence of so terrible a calamity, public works—for example, canals, irrigation, and railroads—were needed. All these schemes demanded money. And whence was the money to come? how was it to be provided? There instantly arose problems about the financial control then exercised over the provinces by the Governor-General. In this matter the ideas of Sir John Lawrence were naturally not very reconcilable with those of the governors of presidencies, nor indeed with those of Sir Stafford Northcote himself.

¹ Now Napier and Ettrick.

Part of this problem, again, was the relation of the supreme Government of India to the local government of Bengal. Here once more Sir John Lawrence had to be coped with. Again, the difficulties of taxation were great; for the Europeans in India consistently disliked to pay taxes themselves, while they were generously eager to tax the natives. To get money by an income-tax, if that would be tolerated, was the natural and desirable expedient; but even the licence-tax which, in default of an income-tax, was imposed, caused Anglo-Indian "indignation meetings" to howl. As to the much-needed public works again, some were being attempted by companies, as by the Orissa water company; but the task was reckoned beyond their strength, and there were endless and tedious negotiations for the transfer of their plant to Government. Schemes for borrowing in support of public works had to be devised, and for making the works as far as possible and as soon as possible remunerative. The financial troubles were complicated by the recent failure of the Bombay Bank, by the necessity to reorganise a bank in Bombay, and by Sir Stafford's natural reluctance to involve the Government in the affairs of this institution.

Such, roughly speaking, were the more pressing questions of ways and means: the means were required to prevent more famines; the ways had to be discovered.

In foreign politics there was the Afghan trouble—then peculiarly troublesome, as Afghanistan was divided between various pretenders, who cast hopeful glances, now at England, now at Russia and Persia. On all this business Sir Stafford mainly agreed with Sir John Lawrence. He, as every one knows, was an advocate of back, not of forward, play. His policy was to recognise, as completely as possible, every Afghan chief of power, any successful man who was capable of reaching the throne and remaining there. He was entirely averse to making the Afghans superfluously hostile by military interference within their borders. So far, Sir Stafford was in agreement with the Governor-General. The question is not one on which an amateur should offer an opinion, be-

yond remarking that, in Central Asia as in cricket, back play is good and forward play is good; what is bad is being caught "in two minds."

There were also problems as to our relations with native princes. A difficulty in a native State, the succession to the State of Mysore, where the ruler was childless, but had adopted an infant, at that moment occupied the Indian Secretary. In his despatches on this topic, Sir Stafford showed a judicial attitude of mind and a strong repugnance to the "special pleading" (a cynic might borrow the term "pettifogging") which he thought he detected in the policy of his predecessor Lord Cranborne.

The unfortunate position of the missionaries and of the representative of England in Abyssinia, was a point in foreign affairs which caused trouble and anxiety enough to the Secretary of State. He proved an unfaltering supporter of Sir Robert Napier (Lord Napier of Magdala), and the very laborious and expensive Abyssinian expedition was undertaken successfully. These matters, with the question of place for natives of India in the Civil Service of India, are the chief things of moment which occupied Sir Stafford in the course of his Indian Secretaryship. It has appeared well to state them briefly by way of a beginning, and before offering the details of his management. Even in this place it may be said generally that his policy was generous, warm-hearted (where the needs of the people of India were concerned), and clear-sighted, as is proved by the success of the ideas he adopted as to the financial relations of the presidencies with the supreme Government.

For the better understanding of Sir Stafford's Indian administration, it may be well to take each of the various important points separately, as each is treated in his official correspondence. In his letters to the Governor-General, and to the other Indian authorities, the same subjects are constantly recurring, and there is consequently a necessary sameness in his remarks. A chronological order in which the points are studied as they occur is therefore inconvenient here, and it is best to treat of each Indian question separately.

To begin with the relations, and especially the relations of financial control, between the supreme Government and the presidencies, the business is briefly put, by Sir John and General Richard Strachey in their 'Finances and Public Works of India' (p. 136).

For many years the ordinary financial condition of India had been one of chronic deficit; and the main cause of this state of affairs was the impossibility of resisting the constantly increasing demands of the local governments for the means of providing every kind of improvement in the administrations of their respective provinces. Their demands were practically unlimited, because there was almost no limit to their legitimate wants, and the local governments had no means of knowing the measure by which their annual demands upon the Government of India ought to be regulated. They had a purse to draw upon of unlimited, because of unknown, depth. . . . They found by experience that the less economy they practised, and the more important their demands, the more likely they were to persuade the Government of India of the urgency of their requirements.

Again, General Strachey writes:—

The distribution of the public income degenerates into something like a scramble, in which the most violent has the advantage, with very little attention to reason: as local economy leads to no local advantage, the stimulus to avoid waste is reduced to a minimum.

Once more:—

Constant differences of opinion about petty details of expenditure and constant interference of the Government of India in matters of trivial importance, brought with them, as a necessary consequence, frequent conflicts with the local government. . . . The relations between the supreme and local governments were thoroughly inharmonious.

Lord Cranborne produced, in illustration of this, a comic case of a correspondence between the supreme and a local government as to fixing up pegs in a soldiers' swimming-bath, and on this momentous topic letters pass between Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir John Lawrence. In these circumstances, the local governments (if they were even to nail up pegs in swimming-baths) needed "a larger

measure of financial responsibility and power." Papers on this subject were written by General Strachey in 1867, and with his views Sir Stafford agreed from the beginning. Thus, on April 10, 1867, he writes to Sir Seymour Fitzgerald:—

I hope you will do whatever you can to set matters right with the Government of India. Your relations are delicate, and great care is needed. I think myself that it would be very advantageous if we could put the local governments upon something like an allowance, and let them manage their own expenditure within certain limits. The present system does not strike me as one likely to produce economy; because feeling that you are under the control of the Government of India neutralises the feeling of responsibility, and tends to make your Government reckless as to what they propose, and so to bring about a corresponding disposition on the part of the Government of India to treat you as spendthrifts who must be kept in check.

The uncomfortable relations of a stern parent with extravagant progeny were thus, by the then existing system, established between the Governor-General and the governments of the presidencies.

The relations of the supreme Government and the government of Bengal were parts of the general problem, and in consulting Lord Napier on those points, Sir Stafford repeats his remarks on the "allowancing" of the local governments. On August 15, Sir Stafford wrote to Sir John Lawrence about these ideas, and about the alternative course, which is rendered impossible by the magnificent freedom of our boasted institutions. I quote the passage at length, for its general instructiveness.

I should also much like to know what changes you think might advantageously be made in our system in India. My own ideas point to—1st, a remodelling of the Bengal Presidency administration; 2d, a partial decentralisation of the whole system of Indian government; 3d, the adoption of some principles of finance which may render the execution of public works on a great scale easier; and 4th, a more systematic employment of natives in the Civil Service.

1. As regards Bengal, my impression is that it would be well to separate the less advanced districts, such as Orissa and Assam, from Bengal proper, and to place them under commissioners on

a non-regulation system. Sir C. Beadon tells me that this is a retrograde policy ; but I am not sure that it is necessarily wrong on that account. I do not want to de-Bengalise Bengal itself, but are we not misapplying its peculiar system when we carry it into such districts as those I have mentioned ?

Whether the chief of the Bengal Presidency should be a governor sent out from England, like the governors of Madras and Bombay, or a lieutenant-governor drawn from the ranks of the Civil Service, is a question upon which I do not feel at all clear. The answer must greatly depend upon the maintenance or the abandonment of the close connection between the Government of India and that of Calcutta. If Calcutta is to be the capital of India, you cannot have a really independent government of Bengal. Ought, then, Calcutta to be the capital ? That depends, I think, upon the question, On what principles is India to be administered ? Is it to be governed on English or on Indian principles ? Are we to endeavour to impress our own character on the people, or to adapt our institutions to their characters, and, it may be, to their weaknesses ? Are we to centralise or to localise ? These are not easy questions to answer, or perhaps I should say, they are questions which it is easy to answer either way. It seems natural to say—A Christian nation, a nation professing what it believes to be the highest form of civilisation, ought to apply itself to christianise and civilise those who have been committed to its charge. It has obtained a certain foothold in that portion of the empire where the English capital is situated, and from that vantage-ground it can best proceed to assimilate the rest of India to its ideas. It may apply itself to the development of education, the improvement of law, the introduction of a European tone into the institutions of the metropolitan presidency, and may trust to the gradual extension of the influence of the metropolitan element throughout the rest of the country. I am not sure that if England were the reverse of what she is, this might not be the right policy. But it would require an iron will to carry it into effect. You would need a Strafford with his policy of "Thorough." You must be prepared to find that, in order to accomplish a benevolent purpose, you would have to do many things extremely disagreeable to the objects of your benevolence ; that you would have to improve a good many of them off the face of the earth ; and that your means would often come to be very unworthy of your ends. Perhaps in the long-run the policy, pursued with sufficient vigour, might succeed, and the result might be worth the cost ; but it is pretty certain that a Government like that of England, with its House of Commons and its free press, and a telegraphic communication which

brings India within a few hours of our door, never will pursue such a policy with any vigour at all.

I look, therefore, to the opposite policy : that of localising our administration as much as possible, and adapting it to the wants and the prejudices of each district, introducing our own ideas with great caution and forbearance.

2. For this purpose, I should say, decentralise, and especially remove our seat of government from Bengal. Let Bengal have a thoroughly well-organised government of its own, and give it a sufficient amount of freedom of action to make up for the loss of the imperial position. I do not quite know where the seat of the supreme Government should be ; but I think, wherever it is, the Governor-General ought from time to time to visit different parts of India to see with his own eyes what the local governments are doing, to learn their wants and to take counsel with them, and to invigorate them with his presence and advice. If a good division of work and responsibility could in the first instance be made, if it could be decided what classes of questions must be reserved for the supreme Government, and what should be left to the presidency governments, I think we should be in a fair way to solve the problem of the administration. I cannot think that the presidency governments ought to be under the entire control and direction of the supreme Government. I think they should have certain duties and functions assigned to them, for the due discharge of which they should be directly responsible to the home Government, which would naturally exercise a very moderate amount of self-control. I would let the presidency governors appoint their own councils, and make them directly responsible for all their actions. In like manner I would let the Viceroy appoint the supreme council, and make him absolute in all matters which were reserved for the supreme Government, responsible of course to the home Government, but in no way fettered by his own council. He should, of course, be required to consult his councillors, and they should be entitled to put on record their opinions. He might also assign particular departments to them, and allow them to manage those departments so long as he was satisfied with them. As regards members of council to be appointed from England, it would probably be well that the Secretary of State should continue to nominate one or two. But this is a point for consideration.

3. The decentralising system would, of course, carry with it some provision for giving to the local governments certain powers of raising local taxes and regulating local expenditure within given limits. I should like to consider how far this change could be made to fit in with my notion that advances

for public works should be made on a footing analogous to that of our Exchequer loans or our drainage loans. If the central Treasury advanced £500,000 (say) to Bombay to be expended in reproductive works, Bombay might be required to repay the amount in twenty or thirty years by way of terminable annuity, and the central Treasury could lend out the money as it came in, to fresh works, perhaps there, perhaps in another presidency, on the same terms, so that the money would never be idle. The presidency in which the works were executed might have the whole, or a fixed proportion, of the profit to be derived from them in aid of its local revenue. All this will require careful consideration, but I wish to know how far the idea commends itself to you.

4. As regards the admission of natives to the Covenanted Service, I am considering whether we ought not to have examinations in India, and select, say, five or ten young natives a-year for the Civil Service, who should then come over and complete their education in England. I cannot, however, enter fully into this question just now.—I remain, &c.,

STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

In some of these opinions, Sir John Lawrence was not at one with Sir Stafford Northcote. A man in Sir John's position feels the need of being strong. He may well be pardoned if he hankers (though it is not meant that Sir John hankered) after the policy of "Thorough." Necessarily he must dislike whatever removes authority from his grasp, and a greater measure of freedom for the local governments must mean weakness to him. He opposes decentralisation because a man who is at the centre is always likely to oppose it. Yet the policy, on the whole, appears to have been successful. But as a Special Committee was sitting at home on the organisation of the Bengal Government, Sir Stafford writes to Lord Napier and Ettrick: "I am anxious to get them to agree to the assignment of a special amount of revenue for local purposes to the different presidency governments." In a letter (October 28) to Mr Massey, whose Budget "was a grief to him," he states his theory with more details.

My own ideas tend very much to the ultimate, if not the immediate, separation of the general from the local finance of India.

I should like to see the debt, the military charges, the railway system, post-office, mint, telegraph, law and justice, ecclesiastical and possibly educational expenses, and so forth, charged to India generally, and placed as much as possible under the direct control of the supreme Government. To meet these charges I would assign to the Government of India the customs, salt, opium, and perhaps the *abkarry* (i.e., excise) revenues, with a further power of calling upon the presidency governments to contribute *pro rata* as much as was necessary to meet the expenditure, which the items I have named would hardly do. Then I would leave to the presidency governments their land revenue and what they could raise by direct taxation, and let them manage their own system of collecting it, their own civil administration, and, subject to certain restrictions, their own public works. I have not attempted to work out the scheme, and it is not quite fair to throw a rough suggestion of this kind in the matter, where everything turns upon details, loosely down. I mention it, however, to show you in what direction I am looking. I am strongly impressed with the necessity for strengthening the Government of India by relieving it of all the work which the presidency governments can properly do themselves; and I believe the presidency governments will work better if they have a little more latitude and a little more responsibility. I would of course place them under the general control of the Government of India, would not allow them to impose any new taxes without its consent, and would call on them to submit estimates of their expenditure, and special estimates of great works, as well as vouchers after the fact. I would so regulate their contributions to the general Treasury as to leave a good balance in the hands of the Government of India; and I would try to establish a system of advances to them out of the general Treasury for approved works, to be repaid by them with interest in a given number of years, on a plan somewhat similar to that of our Exchequer loans and drainage advances. The money so repaid might be lent out over again, and in that way a permanent fund would be created for the maintenance and carrying on of public works.

There would probably be some difficulty in establishing the basis upon which the *pro rata* contributions were to be made. The amount of the land revenue (gross) would seem at first sight to be the fairest test of ability; but the existence of the permanent settlement here and there makes it almost inapplicable. I am not sure that the fairest test would not really be that of local expenditure. Thus, if Bombay spends 4 millions on the local administration, local works, and other local objects, while Madras and Bengal spend 3 millions on the same objects, and the

North-West Provinces spend 2 millions, and the Punjab $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions,—then when you called on Bombay for 4 lacs contribution to the general Treasury, you would call on Madras for 3 lacs, the North-West Provinces for 2 lacs—and so on. The effect ought to be to produce greater economy in the local expenditure. But whether such a scheme would be accepted, and would work, I can hardly judge.

The precise points at issue between Sir Stafford and Sir John Lawrence may be gathered from this extract of a letter to Sir John (October 28, 1867):—

Mr Maine (Sir Henry Sumner Maine) does not like the ideas which, as I mentioned to you, our Special Committee are propounding. I think he is right in his objections, and I hope he will convince the Committee, for I should like to have the support of their report in anything I may propose, though I should not scruple to act on my own judgment if necessary. I think Arbutnot and Frere, whose opinions I value the most, are much inclined to agree with Mr Maine. The majority of the Committee say, "Let Calcutta be the capital, fix the Council there, and let the Governor-General go about by himself, as was the practice formerly." You say, as I understand, "Let Calcutta be the capital, but don't fix the Council there; let the Governor-General and his Council keep together, and go about as occasion may require." This is my own view, and I think that, if this system were adopted, the chief seat of Government would by degrees gravitate to some point other than Calcutta—perhaps to Poona, perhaps to Agra, perhaps to some other place. Mr Maine suggests the spending of a certain portion of the year at Lucknow. But as a complement to this arrangement I would strengthen the hands of the Government of India by relieving it of a good deal of the detail which now encumbers, and, as I believe, weakens it. I think the sound official rule of never doing yourself what you can get a subordinate to do efficiently for you, applies to this case. If certain matters can be effectively and safely dealt with by the presidency governments, the Government of India ought not to be burdened with them. I am by no means a violent decentraliser. I think that on certain points we should centralise and on other points localise. The difficulty is, to say which system should be adopted in each case.

Now here is this irrigation question. I am altogether opposed to such centralisation as Colonel Strachey looks to. He need not be afraid of my taking a half-and-half view. I think Madras ought to be put upon its mettle, and held responsible for doing

its work effectually in its own way. But then it must be able to command the means. If it is to submit all its plans to the criticism and disallowance of the Government of India, and if the Government of India is to alter one detail, and top off another, and defer a third, then it would be better that the Government of India should take the whole responsibility and do the work. My answer, therefore, to your question about Colonel Strachey is, "Let us first settle whether the presidency governments are to have any, and what amount of, independent financial authority, and then we can say what should be the position of the director of irrigation work towards them."

Sir John replied (December 7) that the central Government must have powers of control, and that he had always to be interfering with the Bombay government. The obvious answer is, that the proposed changes were urged simply to prevent the necessity of those endless discords. Sir Stafford tells Lord Napier that, "I would go somewhat further towards what you would call a federation than you think feasible." But at this time the majority of the India Council at home seems to have been opposed to the reforming ideas.

The proposal to lighten the duties of the Governor-General by making Bengal a separate government was defeated in Council on December 18. "The newspapers," says Sir Stafford, "seem to be writing a great deal of nonsense about Americanising the institutions of India; but," he adds, characteristically, "there is no use in making one's self unhappy about them." He himself had adopted the view of the minority of the Council, "that it was desirable that the government of Bengal should be erected into a presidency, on the footing of Madras or Bombay," and this was part of his confirmed general theory that "the Government of India should be detached from local administration."¹ But he did not give his vote in Council on this side, because he was in communication with Sir John Lawrence, whose opinion was adverse to the change. As to the proposed alteration of financial responsibility, Sir Stafford's last remark in Parliament on the topic, while he was Secretary, merely

¹ Speech on Government of India Bill, April 23, 1868.

expressed his hopefulness that his ideas, formulated by Mr Massey, would in the long-run prevail. To Lord Mayo was reserved the task of beginning all that Sir Stafford hoped would be done.¹

Turning to another financial question, that of Indian taxation, it is particularly worthy of remark that Sir Stafford was most anxious, as much as possible, to shift the burdens of the poor (who are not always very articulate in India) on to the broader but reluctant shoulders of the very articulate rich. Here, of course, he was quite in unison with Sir John Lawrence.

When Sir Stafford came into office, Mr Massey (the financial member of Council) had just put forth his Budget. There was a deficit—there was need of additional taxation.² Mr Massey proposed a licence-tax on trades and professions, "intended to reach those large classes of persons who, in spite of their considerable wealth, had hitherto managed to shirk their share of the public burdens." There were inconvenient details, and the hurrying through Council of the measure was justly unpopular. Hence, perhaps, more excuse than usual for Anglo-Indian excitement. An income-tax was what Sir John Lawrence and Sir Stafford desired; but, as Sir John writes (March 28, 1867), "the English community have objected to the income-tax. . . . The non-official English community desire that all taxation should fall on the natives, and more especially on the poorer classes. . . . The English community almost universally lend their influence in favour of increased expenditure of various kinds. But when it comes to taxation to meet the extra cost, they resist their share of the burden."

This was the attitude which filled Sir Stafford with indignation and disgust. "With regard to the licence-tax," he writes to Sir John Lawrence, "ought it not to have been carried up to a higher point? It will let the richest classes off rather easily." Later, "I am ashamed of the combined readiness to borrow and unwillingness to be taxed which the Indian public is manifesting."

¹ Strachey, 'Finances and Public Works of India,' 139.

² Bosworth Smith, 'Life of Lord Lawrence,' ii. 515 *et seq.*

Again, to Mr Massey he writes, "An income-tax would have been better than a licence-tax; and if you were to have a licence-tax, you should have carried it up to a much higher point. You might have tried the licence-tax upon a bolder scale, making it a real income-tax upon the trading classes, and carrying it up to a point so high as to hit the rich as much as the poor. . . . I cannot conceive a reason for taxing the higher salaries more lightly than the lower."

Among Indian questions of internal administration one of the most important was that of public works, especially as to irrigation canals and railways. Improved means of communication were most urgently needed, not only for the movements of troops, but even more, at that moment, for the supply of food in case of scarcity. The Orissa famine had frightened every one into energy, and it is plain that irrigation, in a country like India, is one of the first needs of agriculture. In an interesting letter of June 18, 1867, Lord Napier gave Sir Stafford some account of what had been done for irrigation by the ancient civilised races of India.

What strikes me is the extent to which the old native governments had occupied the localities fit for irrigatorial purposes. The country [South Arcot and Chingleput] is a perfect network of tanks and channels. Many of those ancient works are, no doubt, out of repair, and some might be restored and developed by our better science. The superior knowledge of *levels* that we possess will enable us to draw supplies of water to reservoirs from distant intermittent streams. But many of the old reservoirs, breached and dry, are hardly worth restoring: they are filled and silted up, and the basin is too shallow to contain water. The work of excavation would be too expensive, the wet cultivation would not give a sufficient interest on the outlay. When you hear of *hundreds* of old irrigation works in ruins, you may make a large abatement. When the number is analysed, that of really valuable and available ones diminishes notably. I have always found this. And again, when the tank or reservoir cannot be united to a considerable stream which flows from the Western Ghats, or at least from the interior of the country to the eastern seaboard, such a reservoir cannot be regarded as a reliable famine-saving tank. The minor stream and minor

catchment-basins depend on the local rainfall of the year. If the rain does not come at the proper time, the channel and reservoir may all be in perfect order, but they will remain dry, and the wet culture will fail for that year. . . . Nevertheless these local works are most valuable. . . . It is in the extension of irrigation in the three deltas, and in the repair and extension of the old local works, well selected, that we shall do most profitably. I greatly doubt the large undertakings . . . being profitable to the revenue. It may be that they should be undertaken, but they should be submitted to strict inquiry, and undertaken as works of mercy not of profit.

I assure you that in speaking thus, I speak against my sentiments. It is impossible to ride through the provinces as I have done, and as I mean to do, without being inflamed with admiration or impatience, on seeing the old native works, here in beneficent operation, there in dilapidation and decay. The benefits of water to this country are so substantial and so charming, that it is impossible to see the spectacle of irrigation unmoved. There is a green luxuriant country, with a fat contented people, where the water reaches; beyond, an arid, brown, parched expanse, with deplorable hovels, and emaciated inhabitants in rags. I saw the contrast of the green and brown regions admirably last year in the Godavery district: it seemed as if you passed in one step from opulence to desolation. But it is the very beauty and seduction of irrigation that should make us careful and incredulous. We are in no danger of undervaluing it now. . . .

This extract from Lord Napier's letter gives a most vivid picture of what irrigation can do, and in the ancient days had done, for India. If we are to occupy that country at all, we should certainly not fall behind the civilisation of governments which we are too apt to despise.

On the topic of irrigation, Sir Stafford wrote thus to Lord Napier. He felt himself obliged not to be too enthusiastic, as the Government would be working with borrowed money. His constant desire to make use of the services of the natives of India, declares itself in the close of the letter.

May 16, 1867.

MY DEAR LORD,—I have read your letter on the irrigation question with very great interest. It is most valuable, and I entirely concur with your views. I hope I am not too sceptical about irrigation, but I own that I cannot bring myself up to

"concert pitch" with some of my friends on the subject. My belief is that there are districts in which immense good may be done by it, and that really well-considered schemes will prove highly remunerative as well as highly beneficial. But I cannot bring myself to think that it is the one panacea for all the ills of India. I believe that as a general measure the improvement of our communications is of still greater importance. There seem to me to be two classes of irrigation favourers, the speculators and the sensationalists. Both have got hold of a truth, but both are for riding their hobby too fast and too far. The speculators think that a great gain is to be made by developing the resources of a country which might be made more productive than it is. They are no doubt quite right in this so far as regards certain parts of it, and certain well-digested projects; but they are quite wrong when they generalise in the wild way which some of them seem disposed to do. Unless they are very carefully watched and criticised, they will on the whole waste and throw away at least as much capital as they will employ to a profit. This perhaps would not signify if the matter were left to private enterprise. The success of A. and B. will tempt Y. and Q. to enter upon the same field. Y. and Q. may lose their money; and ultimately L. M. and N. will learn a lesson as to the limits within which enterprises of this kind are profitable, and as to the conditions under which they can be undertaken. But if the speculators are backed up by the Government they will be much longer in learning their lesson, and the Government will have to bear heavy losses unless we are extremely careful and even strait-laced in our proceedings. And this decision to borrow money for our works will have a tendency to make Government less careful than it would otherwise be compelled to be. I am most thankful that you are exercising such vigilance. Then, again, the sensational school come down upon us with exhortations to irrigate India, and so put an end to the possibility of famines. Is the whole country available for irrigation? Are the people likely to make use of it in districts where, in nineteen years out of twenty, they have as much rain as they require? and if they do not, what is to happen to them in the twentieth year? It seems to me that the great preservative against these exceptional calamities is to be found in an adequate development of our system of communications, so that in an emergency the wants of one district may be supplied by the abundance of another. . . . I should like to know how far it is possible to employ natives. There must be a good deal of engineering talent among them; but whether they would ever be fit to take command of works is perhaps a question. . . .

The official scepticism of this letter is reflected in Sir Stafford's speech on the Indian Budget (August 12, 1867). He acknowledges the energy with which Lord Cranborne pushed the schemes of improving land and saving life during his brief time at the India Office. "I am sure that upon this head there is no one to whom India owes a greater debt of gratitude." "While irrigation works should be pushed forward vigorously, yet we must be very prudent as to the mode in which we carry out the necessary policy." It was occasionally difficult to get labourers, and there was peril of entering on improvident schemes. "If you send out engineers, you will find able but sanguine men who see everything in rosy colours." But no great work, one might reply, has ever been done by a "doon-hearted loon," as the Ettrick Shepherd phrases it. However, Sir Stafford was afraid that engineers might recommend works which time would prove to be "financially delusive." He quoted the differing estimates of the Bellary scheme from Lord Napier, showing how much more money was required for a much less area than had been anticipated. But the attention of the Indian Government had been roused, and the Indian Government would be supported at home. It had been determined to charge the expenses for irrigation "not to income but to capital," and there followed the details of the borrowing, and the distribution of the sums.

On the whole, Sir Stafford did not belong, as, being financially responsible, he could hardly afford to belong, to the romantic school of irrigators. But who can help longing for the success of that school, and for changing the desert into a garden, the pinched folk of the hovels into a "fat contented people"!

It is with great reluctance that one is obliged to return to the topic of the Orissa famine. Sir Stafford was said to have "veneered the blame all over India." The natural man would prefer to have hanged somebody, several persons in fact, to encourage the others. "There was only one single person in Orissa" (Mr Barlow), Mr Bosworth Smith says, "and he only with a very subordinate authority, who kept his eyes open, and did his duty at a

time when it was not too late to guard against the worst." Only one person among the servants of England who did his duty! And he was "browbeaten into silence for a short period by the rebukes of his superiors." To have hanged the superiors, to have crucified the Board of Revenue at Calcutta, to have "scalped Beadon," would have been a mild but satisfactory act of justice. However, it is the biographer's business to give Sir Stafford's own views in his own words, and not to say what should have been done in an ideal state.

Here follows Sir Stafford's letter to Sir John Lawrence, written after reading the report of the Famine Commission:—

May 16, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN LAWRENCE,—I have read the able report of the Famine Commission with the most painful interest. It seems to me a very valuable document, and one from which we ought to learn a great deal. The famine has sought out the weak points in our administrative system, and the report brings them very clearly to light. What principally strikes me is the want of direct communications between the responsible government and the officers who were best acquainted with the real state of affairs. The interposition of the Board of Revenue between Mr Ravenshaw and the government of Bengal strikes me as the most unfortunate feature in the whole case. Mr Barlow's energetic representations are filtered through the medium of an incredulous Board, and lose all their flavour before they reach the government. The Board and Mr Ravenshaw support each other in their incredulity, and they get of course the support of the Government, which acts on their information. Poor Mr Barlow is stifled by the mass of authority brought to bear against him, well adorned too with maxims of political economy. It is scarcely wonderful that he succumbs. He is a victim to the official demon who is the parent of so much evil amongst us, and whose rule of conduct is—

"Fungi officio taliter qualiter."

The Barlow of the end of February is not the Barlow of November or even of January. The consequence is, that when the Lieutenant-Governor comes to Pooree, Mr Barlow makes no more of his energetic representations, and Sir C. Beadon is justified in saying that it was not suggested to him in the course of his

visit that there was a necessity for importation. But how wonderful it is that after Mr Barlow had written to Mr Ravenshaw in such language as he uses on the 1st of February, and after Mr Ravenshaw had sent such a telegram as that of the 31st January, it should be possible for the Lieutenant-Governor, arriving on the 13th February, to be able to say (as he does in his minute of January 5, 1867) that, "I was in frequent communication with the Commissioner, with the Collector of Pooree, &c., and nothing transpired to show that it was supposed by any one either that there was not sufficient food in the province for the subsistence of the population, or that employment for the able-bodied, aided by private charity, would not suffice to support both the able-bodied and the helpless poor"! Did he ever put a direct question on the point to Mr Ravenshaw or Mr Barlow? Did nothing pass as to the proposal to pay wages in grain? Mr Ravenshaw seems to have shown inexcusable weakness at this time, and I suppose that, backed up by the opinion of the Board of Revenue, he had lapsed again into his original view that there was grain enough in the country, and thought the less he said about the telegram of January 31 the better; but Mr Barlow is apparently a man of more vigour, and no doubt he would have spoken out if he had not been persuaded that it was useless. The action of the Revenue Board seems to have enfeebled the stronger man, and added to the weakness of the weaker. The view taken by the Commission of the causes of weakness in the Bengal Government is interesting. It seems to me that it would be well to take this opportunity of considering whether there should be any revision of its constitution. I should very much like to have your opinion upon the whole subject. To me, as a stranger, it appears very doubtful whether it is well to have the seat of the presidency government at the same place as that of the supreme Government. My impression is, that I should like to see the Revenue Board dispensed with, and the commissioners brought into more direct relations with the Government. But whether such revolutionary ideas are capable of being brought into a practical shape, I do not know. I only throw them out in order to get at your opinions; and perhaps a little to relieve my mind after reading the Famine Report.

The tone of his despatches was criticised, and Sir Stafford defended himself in his speech in the House of Commons of August 2, 1867. "Sir Cecil Beadon," he said, "had left his post when the despatch was written."

"There was nothing to be done in the interest of the province by visiting his conduct with any severe censure, or anything in the nature of a punishment." There were serious reasons for blaming others, and also for finding fault with the system which Sir Cecil had to administer. On the whole, "We had not done with the subject. This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country, to the Government of this country, and to those of our Indian officials, of whom we had been, perhaps, a little too proud." Lord Cranborne remarked, in the same debate, that "it was open to other nations to doubt whether it was possible under any circumstances that the English nation could learn the art of government." It is certainly open.

In the administration of India few things were more important to Sir Stafford's mind than the improvement of the position of the people. As will be seen later, he was anxious for the strictest fairness in dealing with them, and in the interpretation of treaties with the different native States. Among other matters, he was anxious that the people of the country should have their share in the government of the country. He was particularly concerned that they should, as far as possible, be admitted into the Civil Service. On this point (June 24, 1867) he asks the opinion of Sir John Lawrence. "I am myself of opinion," he says, "that some plan should be adopted for rendering it easier than it is at present for natives to gain appointments in the Covenanted services. Whether any use could be made of the Gilchrist foundation to enable young men to come over here and compete, or whether a certain number of appointments should be given by competitive examination in India itself, the successful candidates being selected at a somewhat earlier age than is the case with those whom we select here, and being sent over at the expense of the Government to complete their education, is, I think, a point well worthy of your consideration." "It seems a mockery," he writes to Lord Napier, "to tell them to come and compete in Westminster if they like." Sir John Lawrence (August

17) replies that Englishmen must hold responsible and political offices. Bengalees can pass examinations, but have not the qualities necessary in practice. But he is in favour of doing all that can safely be done for the advancement of the natives. An important statement of Sir Stafford's ideas is to be found in a letter of his to the Earl of Kellie (September 9, 1867), which we quote:—

The question which has occurred to me is, Whether competitive examinations form the best means of selecting natives for our service. I have no doubt that, with all the imperfections and drawbacks of the system, it is the one best suited to us in England; but I do not feel so clear as to its being equally good for the natives of India. The young Englishman who offers himself for competition for the Indian service shows that he has some stuff in him; that he is willing not only to prepare himself for a very severe examination, but to expatriate himself for the best years of his life, and to embark in a career from which he cannot easily turn into any other. By selecting those who pass the best examination, we do not make quite sure of getting the best men; but we have at least as good a chance of getting them in that way as in any other, and we avoid the difficulties which attend the patronage system. But in India I imagine that a well-contrived system of patronage might have its advantages. It would enable our governors to select young men of family and influence, and to enlist them in our service. Competitive examinations might fill our ranks with a very questionable set of young civilians, and when once you had thrown open this door, you could hardly close it. I fancy that if we were to adopt some such rule as that which you suggest—viz., that no one shall rise to a higher grade than that of assistant, unless he has passed a certain number of years in England, and there passed certain prescribed examinations—we might allow the governors to select the young natives for the inferior grades, and might fix the number of appointments to be annually so filled. Of course no one should be appointed who had not passed a test examination in India; but I doubt whether a competitive examination,—and especially a competition with the English candidates in London,—would afford so good a means of getting the right class of men as it does in England.

The institution of scholarships or exhibitions in England, which would enable youths to come over and prepare for the London competitions, would probably be a good complement to this system.

Much the same opinions were expressed in Sir Stafford's speech (April 23, 1868) on the Government of India Act Amendment Bill. He remarked that it "was not pleasant for him" to say that, in the Uncovenanted Service the proportion of Englishmen to native officials was six to one. "The impression of myself and the Council is, that the Uncovenanted Service should be, as far as possible, a native service, though doubtless certain appointments should be given to Englishmen." He thought it desirable that we should provide "some mode by which natives should be admitted into the Covenanted Service," and he proposed to introduce a clause for that purpose. The clause was to assert that "nothing in the Act should prevent the authorities from appointing any native of India to any post in the Covenanted Service, subject to such regulations as may seem expedient to the Governor-General, and as shall be approved by the Secretary for India and the majority of his Council." The Government did not remain in office long enough to carry this bill.

Turning to affairs of external policy, we find Sir Stafford first engaged in the question of the Mysore succession. The native ruler of Mysore was childless: he had adopted a son, a very young boy, and the problem was whether we should acknowledge the son as successor or should annex Mysore. Lord Cranborne had proposed, in Sir Stafford's words, "to let everything depend upon the character of the adopted child." But it was probable that there would be a considerable lapse of time between the death of the Rajah and the majority of the boy.

My principal objection is [he writes], that there will probably be a period of ten or twelve years between the death of the Rajah and the majority of his son, during which there will be ample room for all the machinations and intrigues on the part of the Nizam, and of the agents for the native princes, which you so justly dread. The inclination of my mind, therefore, is to take advantage of the present position of the Rajah, and to make a new arrangement during his life, to which he no doubt would gladly give his assent, whereby we may regulate the affairs of Mysore for the future. If it were not for the inconvenience of upsetting or appearing to upset so many previous decisions, I

should be for replacing the Rajah upon the throne, subject to such conditions as would probably keep him straight for the present, and would certainly give us an effectual right of free entry if he went wrong. Speaking as a Government, I think we ought to find no insuperable difficulty in devising such conditions; and if we are to make Mysore a model native State, it ought to be by the adoption of a constitution which will work with any kind of rajah, and not by relying on the happy accident of getting hold of a decent man. I think your policy of educating the boy involves a good deal of uncertainty in the experiment itself, besides keeping open a question which it is desirable to close, and which I think we could close more advantageously now than hereafter. I own that I do not quite like to commit myself to the special pleading of the Partition Treaty, though your argument is very ingenious and colourable. If it were the only way out of the difficulty I would adopt it, but it seems to me that there is a better way out of it, and that it lies in upholding or recognising the permanent character of the treaty, regarding the Rajah as under temporary forfeiture for a breach of the subsidiary treaty, and making terms with him which may set the question at rest for the future. Of course, in saying this I assume that we are clear against annexation, and if we decide against annexation, I think we must recognise the adoption. If we are not to take this line, I am inclined to prefer Sir C. Wood's high-handed policy to the continuance of the present suspense. I have not yet talked this over with any one, and am anxious to have your general opinion before I do so, as I should be very sorry that there should be any unnecessary divergence between us.

Sir John Lawrence, contrary to his usual policy, was in this case disposed to advocate the annexation of Mysore. The Government, and Sir Stafford, decided against this course, and Sir John Lawrence writes, "Now that we have decided on maintaining the present dynasty, it only remains for us to carry out that policy in a true and honest spirit."

Sir Stafford's notions about the treaty and the equity of the business are set forth thus in a letter to Lord Halifax:—

I shall be most happy to confer with you on the terms in which it should be couched. My views are shortly these:—

1. I hold that the Partition Treaty was intended to establish

a separate Hindoo State, which was to be in close relations with the British Government, and that *that* treaty was in no sense a temporary one. Certainly it did not give *us* any reversionary right to Mysore. Therefore I hold that so much of Lord Cranborne's argument as turned upon the absence of words of inheritance from the Partition Treaty was unsound, as well as (to my thinking) a little unworthy of a great Power. But though the treaty was of a permanent character, I do not think that it amounted to a treaty of guarantee.

2. I hold that the subsidiary treaty was a personal one; that it will expire with the life of the present Maharajah; and that it will be incumbent on us then to come to some new arrangement with whoever may be his successor.

3. I think that, as he has adopted a son, it is expedient for us to consent to that son's succession to the Raj on proper terms, though without admitting that he has claim as of right. It is much easier for us to put him on the throne and make our own terms with him, than to set him aside and claim a right to annex.

4. I think that in making terms with him we ought to reserve far more distinctly than the subsidiary treaty reserved, a right of intervention, and in the last resort of absolute assumption (query, resumption?) of his dominion in the event of misgovernment.

It would extend this chapter too far, if we were to add the instructions for educating the adopted boy, and for administering the State of Mysore during his minority. Enough has been said to show the fair and honourable character of Sir Stafford's mind where treaties with native States were concerned.

Our Afghan relations have ever been one of the *crucis* of the Government of India. Where they were concerned, Sir Stafford was thoroughly in accord with the policy of Sir John Lawrence,—the policy of leaving the Afghans to settle their own embroiled affairs, and of recognising the ruler who emerged successful from the struggle for existence. That struggle, at the moment, was unusually violent, and proposals and requests were, of course, received from the various chiefs who had the singular ambition to rule in Cabul. Sir Stafford's views are briefly given in his letter to Sir John Lawrence, already quoted by Mr Bosworth Smith: "We are very reluctant to intermeddle

in any way with these complicated civil wars, and I hope you will adhere to your policy of entire neutrality." Again:—

I am anxious about the north-west frontier, but am still doubtful of the policy of mixing ourselves up in Afghan quarrels. We should run great risk if we espoused any cause of making a doubtful friend and a host of bitter enemies; but most assuredly the latter would think it their interest to invoke the aid of Russia, and so bring upon us the very evil we are apprehensive of and wish to guard against. I think we should treat Russia with confidence, and should consider well whether we cannot come to some understanding with her for the promotion of our common interest in the extension of commerce in Central Asia, and for the neutralisation of Afghanistan.

The Russians, unluckily, are "kittle cattle" to have "understandings" with, nor is *Anglica fides* proverbially excellent in Russia. But, whether we be Russophobes or not, the policy of making the Afghans the natural allies of Russia, and our deadly enemies, hardly seemed a probable act of folly. *Dis aliter visum!*

Probably the Abyssinian expedition brought more toil and trouble to Sir Stafford Northcote than any other event during his tenure of office. It is not possible nor desirable to give, in this place, a history of that successful expenditure of money on missionaries. No doubt this is not precisely a fair account of the objects of the expedition. But if the British taxpayer will calmly consider what missionaries have cost him, in money, in blood, in international jealousies, during the last fifty years, he will perhaps think that those excellent men should take their own lives in their own hands, like the good Jesuits, like the Père Brébœuf in Canada, of old; like martyred men of our own faith, and our own blood, and our own day.

The part of the Indian Secretary during the expedition was more or less to trust Sir Robert Napier, to aid him, and to soothe the inevitable jealousies, military and civilian. How far he succeeded may be gathered from a letter of that general's:—

20th May [1868].

I have to acknowledge officially how much I consider is due to the prompt manner in which everything that could be suggested was offered me, and my requisitions most promptly met. Your frank confidence has made it a personal pleasure to me to think I have in any way met your wishes.—Believe me, yours very truly,

R. NAPIER.

It is not necessary to write the whole history of the Abyssinian expedition from the point of view of the Indian Secretary of State. Sir Stafford Northcote was, from the beginning, of the opinion that the expedition was necessary: he held to this when some of his colleagues wavered, and he believed in the expediency of thorough and even costly equipment and organisation. On May 10, he writes to the Viceroy that "The inclination of the Council here is to abstain from action of a military character, and I think it probable that this will be the ultimate decision of the Government; but I cannot help feeling that it is very little to our credit that we should leave these men in the hands of such a sovereign as King Theodore without making an effort to release them." Later, he had a moment of hoping that Theodore's power had waned, and that no expedition might be needed. When the expedition was decided on, he writes that "we are anxious not to hamper Napier with too many restrictions, or even suggestions." To Sir Robert Napier he says that "the scale upon which you propose to act is certainly a very large one, and the expense will be serious. At the same time, I think you are right in resolving to be on the safe side." We have since preferred, too calamitously often, to be on the cheap side. He was "unhappy" at the idea of taking a distinction between two "classes" of Theodore's captives, and rescuing one set, while leaving the others to their chance, though "I go all lengths with you" (he says to the present Lord Derby) "in anathematising the folly of the missionaries, who seem to me to have worked hard for their own misfortunes."

An unpleasant part of Sir Stafford's duties was to argue

against Sir John Lawrence's complaint that India had to pay for her troops while they were doing English work in Abyssinia. Sir John's arguments will be found in his biography, by Mr Bosworth Smith. To myself Sir John seems to have had the better case. Sir Stafford's opinion was thus expressed in a letter to the Viceroy:—

The Abyssinian question has been a very thorny one, and there have been many doubtful points to settle. I am sorry, though not surprised, at what you say about the pay of troops. It would have been much pleasanter to have taken them off the finances of India, and I have no doubt we could have carried the popular sentiment with us; but I think it would have been, in the first place, unjust, and, in the second place, to the detriment of India in the long-run. Mr Laing said to me after the division, "I think I have made a very good bargain for India; I hope you will always be able to do as well." I see the newspapers are greatly misrepresenting my argument as to the nature of India's interest in the affair. What I hold is, that India, surrounded as she is by semi-civilised neighbours, with whom she is obliged to enter into occasional diplomatic relations, is far more interested in maintaining the principle of the inviolability of envoys than England is. I believe that, if we had nothing but English and European opinion to look to, we might perfectly argue, "These missionaries are troublesome busybodies; — a headstrong fool; Rassam is certainly to be pitied, but his going there is all the fault of Lord Russell and Layard; we have no business in Abyssinia; Theodore has been horribly mismanaged, and has some ground for complaining of us; the country is difficult, the prospect of success uncertain, the risk of failure and the certainty of great loss considerable: we won't expose our troops, but will go on negotiating and trusting to the chapter of accidents." We should, I hope, feel rather humiliated if we took such a line; but I believe the country would content itself with grumbling a little, while I do not suppose that France or Germany would think us one whit the less powerful, though they might sneer at our want of spirit. But do you seriously believe that such tameness would fail to produce its effect in India, or in the countries adjoining India? Do you suppose, for instance, that the admission that Indian troops could not penetrate so difficult a country as Abyssinia would be a wise one to make? or that Indian envoys to Muscat or Zanzibar would have found it to their advantage to have it commonly reported that England did not trouble herself to rescue her servants?

In any case, I think it certain that, if India were to insist on a strict reckoning in such a matter as this, and were to demand to be paid for her troops when lent for imperial service, the account would be found to be open to rectification on both sides; and the settlement would, I suspect, be very much in favour of England. We should be charged with the cost of a portion of the navy for one thing; and we should have some difficulty in maintaining our right to send home troops whenever we chose to dispense with them, thereby at once throwing more men on the imperial finances and cutting off the capitation payments.

On April 30, 1868, he wrote to the Viceroy that he had heard the good news from Abyssinia,—a consolation among the defeats and disasters of the Government in home policy. His letter to Sir Robert Napier may be quoted, were it but for the characteristic optimism of him who “saw a bit of blue,” when others beheld only clouds, and who was naturally elated by the fortunate close of a laborious and uncertain adventure.

May 1, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT NAPIER,—I need not say with what feelings I received your telegrams announcing the events of the 10th and 13th. We have indeed every reason to be thankful to God for the success with which He has blessed the expedition, and every reason to be proud of our commander and his gallant army. I was staying at Osborne when the news came, and sent the telegrams to the Queen immediately. Her Majesty was greatly pleased, and desired me to send her special congratulations. We are of course most anxious to hear more particulars. When we receive the despatches, we shall lose no time in moving the thanks of Parliament, and in proposing some more substantial mark of the national gratitude. . . . What you have done has been altogether unique, and you have exhibited the British army in an entirely new light to the world. Everybody was ready to acknowledge its martial spirit, and there would have been nothing surprising in its defeating ten or twenty times its number of opponents, or in its capturing the most formidable positions. But you have undertaken and have triumphantly accomplished exactly the sort of task for which nobody believed us to be competent.

The news of our success was telegraphed to the India Office at one o'clock on a Sunday morning. Sir Stafford

was at Osborne. At about eleven o'clock on Sunday his eldest son carried the intelligence to Mr Disraeli. After some delay he was admitted, and found Mr Disraeli gorgeously arrayed in a dressing-gown and in imposing head-gear. Mr Disraeli was opulent in compliment, but wholly declined to give the news to the Sunday papers. It was kept for Monday's journals. As to the victory, Sir Stafford writes to Sir S. Fitzgerald, "every one is delighted—that is, except the Liberals; even the French papers write enthusiastically on the expedition." How times alter, and how little enthusiasm do we excite or expect to-day! Mr Gladstone, however, when the troops were thanked (July 2, 1868), did his old friend full justice:—

The right honble. gentleman [Mr Disraeli] has abstained from claiming any peculiar praise for the Government at home, but I am bound to say that we are indebted to them for the wise choice of the commander. We are indebted to them, and to those with whom they may have taken counsel, for the unbounded confidence they reposed in the abilities of the object of their choice, for the unsparing liberality with which, on deciding the difficult question of facing these great risks, they made the whole forces of the country available for the purposes that were in view; for the care and forethought with which, so far at least as I am able to judge, all the necessary provisions were made. Here it would not be more than justice, I think, to distinguish among the members of the Government that Minister who necessarily must have been charged with the chief share of the responsibility and labours of the expedition—I mean the Secretary of State for India; and lastly, we are indebted to the Government for the firmness and decision with which from first to last they persisted—acting therein, I must say, in accordance with public opinion and the enlightened mind of the nation—in confining the operations of this expedition to its legitimate purpose, and in refusing to be led beyond the line of duty and wisdom by any visions, however flattering and seductive.

For himself, the whole affair had been one of eternal hard work, anxiety, and responsibility for the conduct of affairs which he could but in a distant manner direct. "From the moment I undertook this task," he said in the House (November 28, 1867), "I have never known what it is to be free from anxiety." There were many

reasons why what was to be done had to be done quickly. Sir John Lawrence could part with the Indian force for the time; but who could say when it might be needed in India? It was "a delicate matter to send the natives of India on a foreign expedition, unless you take care to make preparations suitable to their peculiar customs," and all such preparations, and the necessary speed, involved what might seem extravagant expense. It might even be contended that the provisions of the Government of India Act (1858) had been violated in the rapid measures necessary for raising money, and this conduct Sir Stafford had to defend, in his speech of November 28, 1867. With his delicate sense of legality, perhaps this was not the least anxious part of his task. He could quote precedents, under Mr Gladstone, doing so "in good humour." "He did infinitely more in 1859 in the third China war, when he broke the law more deliberately and distinctly than any one can pretend that we have done."¹ Again, necessity had been so pressing, that the expedition was arranged through the nearest and most accessible subordinate government of India, that of Bombay, not with the central Government. The whole perplexity, responsibility, and excitement of so novel, strange, and complicated an affair was borne with Sir Stafford's usual cheery tranquillity, and all ended in success, congratulations, and fireworks. It was characteristic of him that, on the Monday when the House of Commons was excited by the news, he avoided the cheers that were ready to greet him, by furtively entering the House from behind the Speaker's chair.

These ecstasies and enthusiasms could not save the Government. Mr Gladstone, who had warmly congratulated Sir Stafford in the House of Commons, turned them out, on the Irish Church; and so ended Sir Stafford's troubled, but useful and successful, months of work at the India Office.

One little circumstance of a private character may be mentioned. In his own correspondence I do not find, but in the letters of the Indian Provincial Governments I do

¹ Letter to Lord Beaconsfield, November 28, 1867.

find, mention of a sum of £1000 which he gave, from his own purse, to hospitals and other useful institutions in India. When we remember his tender conscience, and the affair of the Sultan's ball, it may, perhaps, be inferred that he thought he owed something to the country which paid for that entertainment. At all events, his liberality, that of a man never rich, was unexampled in Indian Secretaries, as I learn from one of the governors who had to distribute the money. As to the Sultan's ball, the present Lord Iddesleigh furnishes the following account:—

My father has often been attacked on account of the ball given at the India Office by the Secretary of State and his Council to the Sultan on his visit to England in 1867. The expenses of the ball were borne by India, and it has been said that Indian money was thus used to pay for what was in reality an English entertainment. As my father himself has pleaded guilty to "a little sin" in the matter, I am debarred from maintaining his absolute innocence; but I may, perhaps, explain how the "little sin" came to be committed.

I well remember walking home from church with him one Sunday with several other members of the family, when he confided to us that a most brilliant idea had occurred to him during the sermon, which was that the Sultan, as a great Mohammedan sovereign, ought certainly to receive during his English visit some distinguished attention from the Indian authorities. The occasion, he thought, must not be lost, as it was not likely that the Sultan would revisit this country, while it was certain that he would never set foot in India itself. The idea thus started was instantly and warmly taken up by the Indian Council, and invitations were issued for the ball, which was regarded by my father as altogether an Indian ceremony.

The Indian Secretaryship left behind it many responsibilities, and not a little trouble and anxiety. The expenditure on the Abyssinian campaign was challenged later in Parliament, for it had very greatly exceeded the estimates, "rough but not careless," originally produced. The Government were accused at once of having given Sir Robert Napier *carte blanche*, and of *not* having given him *carte blanche*, by interfering with his plans and thwarting his wishes. When Mr Candlish later moved

for an Abyssinian Committee to inquire into the administration and expenses of the war, Sir Stafford seconded the motion, being fully convinced that he at least was free from any shadow of blame. This is anticipating the chronological series of events; but the matter belongs so entirely to the years of Indian Office, that it is best dealt with as part of that period. The draft report of the Select Committee lies before me, with manuscript notes in the hand of Sir Stafford. The chairman's report, as proposed to the Committee, contained twenty-three folio pages of severity. He maintained that the Government, by "giving *carte blanche* to the government of Bombay and the Commander-in-chief, had rendered any reliable estimate by the home Government impossible." Sir Stafford in his notes remarks that this charge is quite inconsistent with many subsequent accusations. "No general *carte blanche* was given," he writes, "though the government of Bombay were told in the first place that their requisitions should be complied with. They were ordered also to send home estimates and monthly accounts." Though backed by a "strict party majority," the chairman was obliged to drop twenty out of his twenty-three pages of arraignment. "The chairman's allegations were negatived without a division by a Committee in which he had a majority."

Of more interest to many people than the details of money paid for mules and hay in Abyssinia are some of Sir Stafford Northcote's many private letters written during his period of office. From Osborne, Balmoral, and Windsor he wrote frequently to Lady Northcote. "The little Prince of Prussia is a great amusement to them all," he writes from Osborne in 1867, "and the Queen is full of his good sayings." At Balmoral he found "the air very enjoyable," and the whole party "very cordial." He discovered that it was "not very easy to hit a stag running at full speed at 150 yards—especially the first time of using a rifle," and may have remembered Henry Ashton, in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' and the "first time he shot in a cross-bow." The rifle had been the Prince Consort's, and was

marked with a stud, not with a notch in Leatherstocking's fashion, for every stag it had slain. A statesman now mature in years, Sir Stafford enjoyed lying for hours on a damp hillside, but not without apprehensions. Consequently he did not try the same sport in a snowstorm, and was reckoned "very much of a coddle" by enterprising youths—an opinion not shared by his sovereign. Indeed, enterprising youth was so benumbed that day as to be incapable of pulling a trigger. October 3 is late for stalking at best, as the stags begin to roar and rush at their assailant—so does Venus move their minds, as Virgil would have said. That he was not unpopular was demonstrated by his need of sixteen of his own photographs to distribute at Balmoral. "I always enjoy the place, and feel brilliantly well here," he writes in October of the following year. With the royal grandchildren he enjoyed what he always liked—a "regular child's party." He owned that he left "with a heavy heart, for this is a place I get very fond of." His last letter—"one more letter from a royal residence to make the last, as the children say"—was from Windsor Castle (November 29, 1868), announcing the decision of the Government to resign at once, as they were well beaten in the elections. The course was "more dignified than waiting to be voted out." He hoped that Mr Bright might succeed him in the India Office, but the Duke of Argyll was appointed to that post.

In the course of the year 1866 a vacancy had occurred in the representation of North Devon, and on the invitation of that constituency, Sir Stafford, vacating his seat at Stamford, came forward as a candidate, and was returned without opposition.

It was a great and sincere pleasure to him to find himself at length representing his own county. His parliamentary connection with it, thus begun, lasted as long as he remained in the House of Commons, and it is probable that never were the relations between a member of Parliament and his constituents more honourable or more affectionate than those which existed between himself and the electors of North Devon.

When Sir Stafford was elected in 1867, his colleague was Mr Acland (the present Sir Thomas Acland), a Liberal, but an old and valued friend.

In 1868, at the general election, an effort was made to win the second seat for the Conservative party, and Sir Stafford and Mr Walrond (the late Sir John Walrond), another and a most intimate friend, stood together, and fought a hard battle. But victory was out of their reach. Sir Stafford was indeed at the head of the poll, but Mr Acland was not far behind him, and Mr Walrond was unsuccessful.

This was the last election contest in which Sir Stafford ever engaged, Sir Thomas Acland and he being returned unopposed at the general elections of 1874 and 1880.

In addressing his constituents that autumn, he was a good deal badgered, as was natural, about the sudden Tory conversion to Reform. He "neither repented of having opposed the bill of 1866, nor of having supported that of 1867." He "did not at all like tame meetings, though he did not like riotous ones," and there was enough of horseplay at Bideford. He maintained that the Liberals had treated Reform as a very nice cake, that was always to be on the table, and never to be cut; "and they were very jealous when they saw any disposition on the part of their opponents to try to cut it." Perhaps one may remain of opinion that it would have been wiser in the Tories to let the Liberals cut their own cake. He thought Mr Gladstone was hasty and inconsiderate in dealing with the Irish Church. But, on this topic, there was a little wrangle between himself and Mr Gladstone. Mr Gladstone was reported to have said at Wigan that Sir Stafford would not pledge himself to resist the disestablishment of the Irish Church. There was, as often happens, a blunder in the report; Sir Stafford had declined to give any pledge that would be binding for ever, "in all circumstances," a kind of pledge which he never would give. As for the property of the Church of England in Ireland, he held that "there was no more doubt about it than about the property of the Duke of Devonshire in Ireland." In his electoral address,

he denounced disestablishment as "tending to shake confidence in the security of corporate or other property." He had to congratulate himself and his constituents on the comparative quiescence of the Fenian conspiracy, if that word may now be used without offence. But in all our troubles with Ireland, "I am tempted to say, after all, it serves us right." No Morrison's pill of administration, he said, would heal that long disease of Ireland, "that long disease, her life," one is tempted to quote. "These evils must be cured by treating Ireland as if she were an integral part of our empire, and not by a course of legislation that must end, as is desired, I believe, by many of the more violent of the Irish party, in the legislative separation, perhaps in the complete separation of the two countries." ("No, no," and uproar.) Then followed "cheers and confusion," a brief phrase expressive of modern political conditions. Into the Parliament which was to level the Irish Church with the other denominations, he entered, and a new chapter in his life began.

CHAPTER X.

THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.

FROM the very beginning of 1869, Sir Stafford Northcote's time was occupied much more with the affairs of the Hudson Bay Company than with the disestablishment of the Irish Church, which was engaging the attention of Parliament. In the plan of that celebrated measure, he admired (he says in a private letter) the ingenious "combination of bribery and robbery." He perceived that people would be not unwilling to "exercise charity to the poor and interesting classes, without cost to themselves, by giving up our parsons and their sermons." "People are now openly saying that the scheme will be just as applicable to England as to Ireland, and I am beginning really and seriously to think it probable that the attempt

will be made to apply it to us within a few years, unless a reaction soon takes place in public opinion." However, his practical business was less, as has been said, with the Irish Church than with another picturesque corporation whose property was going where all property goes at last—to the stronger.

The victim in this case was the Hudson Bay Company, of which he became chairman in January 1869. Sir Stafford's reputation as a financier gained for him many offers from City people of positions of dignity and trust. The emoluments were often tempting, but with a single exception he refused all. Unless some use of his special qualifications was to be made, he considered, and wisely, that chairmanships and trusteeships had better be held by those who made finance and financiers their special study. In common with all honourable men, he would never of course give his name when he could not hope to give thought and time to the subject involved. The one office he did accept was the governorship of the Hudson Bay Company in 1868, the directors having reason to think that a statesman of his standing would be of particular value to the Company in the delicate and difficult negotiation of transferring their huge estate of Rupert's Land to Canada. The Company was assuredly in a parlous state. It was an anachronism, and a wealthy anachronism. The Company was dear to the fancy of boyhood, when we read Washington Irving's 'Astoria,' and dreamed of Indians, bears, beavers, and *voyageurs*. It was the queen of unmeasured tracts of wild land in the American North-West. It had been in its time a kind of sovereign, and had waged private wars; it had a charter from Charles II., and held (of the manor of East Greenwich) the gigantic slice of the globe which is now Manitoba. But civilisation, population, immigrants, politicians, were now pressing harder on the Company than ever it had pressed on the Red man. The North American colonies of Great Britain had been formed into a Confederation in 1867, and the Confederation was big enough to swallow the old "Rupert's Land," the old wildernesses of the Hudson Bay Company. Indeed it was only too true that the Company must "come and be killed" by

the Canadians, like the legendary ducks. Lord Granville wrote a letter from the Colonial Office to Sir Stafford Northcote, as Governor of the Company (March 1869), and in that letter he explained the case with ruthless clearness. The Company was an anachronism; it must accept the best terms which Canada would condescend to give. Civilisation, or what is commonly called civilisation, was encroaching on the territory from the United States. Enterprising rowdyism was here, discontented and bewildered Blackfeet and Sioux Indians were there. It had been found that the vast "fertile belt," as large as England, was as good land as any in Yorkshire. The Hudson Bay Company, a decrepit association of trappers, armed with "a mere parchment" (as the Canadians said), and that an old parchment, the gift of the "Merry Monarch," and of doubtful application, could not be allowed to leave valuable domains in possible anarchy. At any moment border troubles with ruffians or with Red men might bring us into collision with the United States. Canadian enterprise and capital were checked, and immigration to Canada was discouraged. Men were anxious to take the places of black bears, elks, beavers, minks, martens, silver foxes, and other valuable animals. Thus, as Lord Granville pointed out, that the Company should lose its land was expedient for the United States and for Canada.

"To the Hudson Bay Company the concession may almost be said to be necessary."

This was the death-sentence of the Company, as far as their old wild principality was concerned. The only question was, How much could the Company save out of the wreck? It is needless to give a lengthy report of the long negotiations. The Canadian tone was cavalier, and their representatives were particularly vexed by Sir Stafford's alleging that the Company made concessions "cheerfully." It was like him to say so, but some Canadians could not forgive him for being cheerful. His private letters to Lady Northcote contain a number of references to this business. He recognised that the Company, when reorganised five years earlier, had paid the old shareholders

too much for lands that would now have to be sold at a loss. The Company had another loss in a mild winter, which depressed the demand for the spoils of minks, martens, and silver foxes. Disturbances from the French half-breeds were feared on the Red River, "for those Canadians are an unscrupulous set, and are intriguing there in a way that will make the settlement too hot to hold us, unless the Government will put them down with a firm hand." Monsieur Louis Riel was moving: the Red River French half-breeds were complaining that the Company meant to "sell" them. Their priests were active. Fort Garry was the centre of the disturbances—distant, inaccessible Fort Garry. Meanwhile Lord Granville, in the letter already referred to, had suggested terms of surrender, to which Sir Stafford and Sir Curtis Lampson finally induced the Hudson Bay shareholders to agree. The Company gave up Rupert's Land (the old name) "to her Majesty," and the Canadians were to pay £300,000 to the Company when Rupert's Land was transferred to the Dominion. Six years earlier the land had been valued at a million. There were many other articles in this agreement, as to reserves of land, stations, about special taxation, and so forth. The shareholders met on March 24, 1869. Sir Stafford was in the chair, and persuaded the Company to execute itself not uncheerfully; for, if they did not, they would come under Canadian taxation, and would not get the £300,000. "I do not think you would expect me to tell you all the disagreeable things the Canadians might do," he said; "because we do not want to put them into their heads, but there is no doubt that they might do a great many very inconvenient things." On the other hand, his cheery view of the future, supposing the terms were accepted, must have failed to soothe the already irritated Canadians. The meeting was adjourned, but the Governor got his way. This affair was the cause of his trip to North America in the following year, first mooted early in 1870, when he wrote (January 22): "What should you say to my going as Joint Commissioner with Bishop Tache to the Red River?" These, though late in life, were his

Wanderjahre. His reasons for going were to see the Canadian Government, and to take care of the Company's interests during the transfer. Sir Curtis Lampson suggested that Lady Northcote should accompany her husband. There was a great deal of worry and indecision. "My friend Lord Granville is too sharp to please either Lampson or myself, and is what the Marchioness would call such a 'wonner,' that I fancy we shall feel uneasy if we have to separate and deal with him from different sides of the Atlantic."¹ "I am really quite ill with the worry," he adds; "Dizzy is immensely sympathetic and very flattering." The indecision was caused by the behaviour of the Canadians, who could not make up their minds about receiving a visitor so unscrupulously "cheerful." Canada was in a difficulty with the Riel insurgents on the Red River, and their demands ("if she refuses she will have to fight them, and it will be an awkward business for her"); and, on the other side, if she gratified the Rielites at the expense of the Company, *they* would "kick up such a dust as will bother the Government, and perhaps Canada too." It was a quadrangular duel between the Company, Canada, the Home Government, and Riel's half-breeds, who had destroyed £50,000 of the Company's property. Who was to pay for this loss?

These anxieties were caused by the kind of interregnum between the Government of the Company and that of Canada. The Red River people, especially the French half-breeds, conceived that their interests and rights were menaced. The protection of law and order was not in the hands of the Company after December 1, and yet Canada was hardly in a position to act with vigour. Meanwhile the Company was nervous about its £300,000, which ought to have been paid by December 1, but had not been paid. Sir John Young was finally appointed Governor of Rupert's Land by the Company, which, at the same time, was to retain *no* control over his actions. In these confused and distracting circumstances, Lord

¹ The Marchioness is the Marchioness Swiveller, and the "wonner" was Miss Sally Brass.

Granville "could not say how public-spirited" he thought Sir Stafford's conduct in deciding to go out to scatter oil on the tempestuous waters of the Red River.

This disturbed stream had recently reflected a flag bearing the *fleur-de-lis* and shamrock, instead of the Union-jack. What either the shamrock or the *fleur-de-lis* had to do *dans cette galère*, the heraldic learning of M. Louis Riel, and Mr O'Donohue his ally, could no doubt explain. But the whole confusion—what with half-breed French, loyal French, English half-breeds, Scotch settlers, provisional governments, Sioux on the war-path, assemblies, delegates, American sympathisers, and Irishmen at large—would have been comic, had it not been highly inconvenient and menacing.

It was on April 6 that Sir Stafford, with Lady Northcote and his sons Henry and Amyas, started for Liverpool and for the troubles of the West. The voyage was uneventful, and in Montreal the shooting of Scott by Riel was found to be the chief interest. England had lost a chance by dallying over the trouble, it was said; energy would have been a great encouragement to loyal Canadians. They fancied that England would gladly be rid of them. Filibusters were said to be ready to go against Riel if troops were not sent—so Sir Stafford writes in the diary of his Canadian residence. The United States officers sent warnings of Fenian attempts on bridges. Altogether the prospects were warlike. Mr Donald Smith also reported that the Company would lose £100,000, and would find it hard to get compensation. Moreover, the fur-trade was ceasing to be remunerative: the Company must look for other dealings than in minks and silver foxes. Perhaps the worst news was that some of the Company's officers were thought to have abetted Riel. They, too, had their objections to the transfer of land and the Canadian domination.

On reaching Ottawa, Sir Stafford found the site of the town in possession of but one advantage. It was so exquisitely and universally inconvenient, that "nobody can complain of his neighbours being better off than himself." He had not long to suffer in Ottawa. On April 24, a telegram came from the Colonial Office. The

troops might advance on conditions. The £300,000 was to be paid down. Canada was to send 500 soldiers to the English 250, and to acquiesce in the decision of the Home Government as to disputes with the settlers. General Lindsay was to approve of the military arrangements. The Bishop of Rupert's Land said that troops ought to have been sent long ago. Meanwhile the Canadian Government was consulting with delegates from the Red River people. Sir Stafford's immediate business was to obtain some compensation for losses to the Company in consequence of the rising under Riel. The sum of £50,000, or even £40,000, seemed a fair equivalent for the losses. The shabby behaviour of the Home Government in the whole affair was the point on which he found it most easy to agree with the Canadian statesmen. The English Government should have settled all questions *before* the transfer to Canada.

Sir G. Cartier's defence of the Canadian conduct may be quoted:—

Sir G. Cartier came in while we were talking, and I repeated to him the substance of what had passed. He assured me that the Government, in declining to accept the transfer of the country in December, had not been influenced by pecuniary considerations, but by others of a political character; and that amongst other things they had feared that if Canada accepted the transfer the status of the insurgents might be held to be altered, and that the United States might claim a right to recognise them as belligerents; whereas, so long as the country remained under the Government of the Hudson Bay Company, to which no objection was taken, the affair could only be regarded as a riot. I said I had no desire to question the conduct of Canada in declining to accept the transfer, or to inquire into the motives of the Government. What the Company was concerned with was the refusal of her Majesty's Government to accept the surrender, and that I held that we had a good claim in respect of that refusal—it being for her Majesty's Government to settle afterwards with the Government of Canada how that claim was to be met. Both the ministers concurred that we had a good claim, and that Canada was, to some extent at all events, responsible. They said the Home Government had behaved very shabbily in the matter—a sentiment which I was not disposed to dissent from.

On May 13, Sir Stafford went to New York. He declined to be "dead-headed" or franked on this expedition. The railway directors receive all thanks for this favour; the shareholders, without any glory, bear the expenses. His remarks on the hotel and the people there are curious:—

Betook ourselves after dinner to the sitting-rooms, which have a pretty good supply of ottomans and chairs, but are as bare of tables as if the guests had eaten them (like Ascanius in Virgil). The company evidently had no use for such articles. They spent their time in walking about the corridors, or in sitting on the ottomans, talking or gazing, as the case might be. There was not a book, or a piece of work, or a game of any sort, to be seen; neither did we hear a note of music. The general impression produced was, that the party were a number of unburied ghosts, wandering about till their term of probation was over and Charon ready to take them across the Styx; or perhaps a modern would rather compare them to a number of passengers, without luggage, loitering in a waiting-room till the train should arrive. One quite understands, now, how these people take to whittling sticks. A person with the smallest energy must do it in self-defence. C. and I, after musing a bit, decided on a game of bezique, and walked twice through the rooms to find a place to play. At last we discovered a small marble table, to which we drew our chairs, and began to play. The effect was something like that produced in the streets of London when an ordinary-looking individual suddenly stops, pulls off his coat, discloses a mountebank's costume, and begins to perform. The company began to cluster near the table, or at all events to stand at the door of the room, and to gaze at us with unmixed astonishment. As we got up to go, a gentleman came up to me. "What game might you be playing, sir?" "Bezique," says I. "Wal, now, was that bezique?" "Yes." "Wal, I've played it with six people; can you play it with two?" "Yes." "Guess you've got two packs." "Yes." (If the packs had not been very dirty ones, we should have proposed to him to play.) C. explained to him that there were sets sold for four or six players, and he said that must be better, because there was more room for cheating. We wished him good-night, and as he fell back to his friends, who were looking on at this interview, we heard him say, "Wal, I guess I can't make out what game it is."

In New York, a prominent Democrat showed him the delicate machinery of balloting.

He defended the ballot for the sake of peace at the polling time, and described the system under which bribery and intimidation were carried on by agents stationed 100 yards from the boxes (they must not come nearer), who give the voters the cards they are to put in, and watch them drop them into the boxes. The voters, however, sometimes defeat them by carrying slips of paper, with gummed backs, in the hollow of their hand, and sticking them over the ticket with which they have been supplied, thus substituting a different list.

He also beheld Mr Gould and Mr Fisk without envy. From New York he went to Niagara, of which his description is graphic and brief:—

It was a grander Chaudiere, characterised by the same individuality among the waves which had struck us on the Ottawa; but, instead of recalling the idea of boys rushing merrily though tumultuously out of school, the waters rather suggested that of Milton's fiends flying headlong from heaven to hell, recoiling with horror from what was before them, but driven forward by the greater fear of what was behind. As night drew on, and the noises of the day came to an end, the sound of the Falls became more conspicuous. Perhaps that is a bad word to use, but the sound was one that impressed itself on more than a single sense. It was like the Egyptian darkness, something that could be felt.

On returning to Montreal, the party had news of the Fenian invasion, described in the following extract from the Diary:—

We reached the Thousand Islands about seven, and thoroughly enjoyed the lovely scenery. It looks as if Jupiter, when he had done making the world, had found that he had a number of little gems still to dispose of, and had thrown them all into the St Lawrence,—or it may be that Paradise, when Adam had been turned out of it, had been broken up and scattered on these waters. We shot the "Long Sault" rapid about 1.30 P.M.; the Cedars, Coteau, Cascade, and finally the Lachine rapids in the course of the afternoon. That there is some danger, is shown by the hull of a vessel which was lost on the Coteau last year, and might be inferred from the fact that the authorities do not allow the troops to be taken down the rapids, and require the vessels, when conveying them, to pass through the canals. We met Colonel Gray, M.P. for St John, N.B., at Presert. He gave a poor account of Sir John A., and said Lady Macdonald was very low about him. Sir J. Young was, he said, very uneasy about

the Fenians. He said that one of our steamers had got aground in passing through the canal at the Sault, and that four American tugs, which had come alongside, had refused to assist her. We reached Montreal soon after seven, and found the whole city in an uproar. The Fenians had really crossed the frontier, and there had been actual fighting at Pigeon Hill. The volunteers had gone out full of ardour; one corps, we are told, actually carried ropes with them to hang any Fenians they might catch. All sorts of details were given: most of them subsequently proved incorrect; but there was a real incursion and real bloodshed. Three Fenians certainly have been killed, and one gun taken. General O'Neill seems to have allowed himself to be taken by the United States authorities. The two centres of Fenian strength are at Malone and St Albans. The object of the invaders at Pigeon Hill was to seize St John's, and so command the approach to Montreal. This attempt has been defeated; had it succeeded, the rails would have been taken up on the Grand Trunk Railway, so as to prevent the Fenians from running trains upon it. As it is, the rails are lifted up at certain points and trains examined before they are allowed to proceed. Besides the force which attacked us at Pigeon Hill, there is another which is moving in the direction of Huntingdon.

On May 28 the party left for England, having obtained a clear idea of American hostility, Fenian intentions, and the general medley of the situation. The Fenian alarms were a constant cause of disturbance between Canada and the States. This ill-feeling was one motive for the later Treaty of Washington. The withdrawal of the British troops he also thought "an unfortunate step." To settle the trouble with Riel needed the Red River Expedition, the *ultima ratio* of war. As to the information collected, it is best stated by Sir Stafford himself in a letter to Mr Disraeli:—

People here say England has missed a great opportunity in this Red River business. If, on the first breaking out of the difficulty, and when Canada declined to accept the country till peace had been restored, the Imperial Government had frankly recognised the duty of restoring it, and had sent a Lieutenant-Governor of their own, with a small body of troops to support him, the matter would have been arranged with the greatest possible ease, the effect on Canadian opinion would have more than neutralised that produced by the withdrawal of the troops, and the effect on the United States would have been to show

that whatever might be England's view of the best military disposition of her forces, she had no intention of abandoning her North American possessions, or of giving up the scheme of confederation. It was the course I urged on Lord Granville in December; but I suspect he was overruled by the Cabinet. The announcement that England was going to administer the affairs of the colony for a time, and to give everybody a full hearing as to the terms on which it was to be annexed to the Confederation, would have stopped the whole business, would have saved the necessity of this expedition, prevented the danger of an Indian war, and preserved the fortunes of the Hudson Bay Company. I am far from feeling easy about the expedition, though matters now look so much better than they did that I am more hopeful. Probably no opposition will be attempted, and the force will be made welcome. But should there be opposition, we may find the difficulties will be very great.

Colonel Wolseley's victory over space and difficulties of transport, with the flight of Riel (the lily) and O'Donohue (the shamrock), permitted affairs on the Red River, and business between Canada and the Company, to settle down peacefully.

The mercantile and mere political affairs of a company, however ancient, and however picturesque its history, and Sir Stafford's connection with its administration, are scarcely matters for biography. He made an important speech to the shareholders in June 1871, discussing the whole position and policy of the association. He recommended a complete and thorough reorganisation of the fur-trade, on a system involving large expenditure of money. A number of the shareholders preferred to drop the fur-trade, and trust to the land and the sales of land. He, on the contrary, showed that the Company had increased its imports of furs, that prices were good, and that the unprofitableness of the trade arose from the greater expense of its management and working. These expenses would be diminished, he conceived, by the new methods of transport, by the new railway system of Canada and the United States, and by the Company's own introduction of steamers. The old famous class of *voyageurs*, familiar to readers of Washington Irving, was dying out. The Company was also able, if it chose, to

supply the new immigrants with the goods they wanted, and this business would increase the general prosperity of the settlement. The Company, it will be seen, which had of old opposed colonisation in the interests of fur, was now anxious to aid it.

For all these purposes, "new blood," new officers, were needed in the Company's service. Now the actual officers were, in a way, sharers in the profits and members of the Company, not mere *employés*, and their consent to the changes was necessary. The officers, like Mr Donald Smith, a member for Manitoba in the Canadian Parliament, were men of weight and importance. They were especially necessary in dealings with the Indians. It was therefore most undesirable to dismiss them, with the fur-trade by way of compensation. They claimed, and had "a moral right" to a share of the famous £300,000, which they did not get. Other claims they had, very strong morally, but not valid in law. To dissatisfy them would not only be unfair and unkind, but, owing to their position in the country, most inexpedient. He calculated, therefore, the value of the "retiring interests" of the officers, and this sum he advised the Company to pay—namely, £100,000.

There was a good deal of dissent among the shareholders, one of whom classically remarked that Sir Stafford's "candid and winning manners" had "made the worse appear the better reason." His ideas ultimately prevailed.

CHAPTER XI.

DIARY OF VISIT TO THE OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL, AND GREECE.

It seemed fated that Sir Stafford's voyages were to be made comparatively late in life. Before his Canadian expedition he sailed the seas of Greece in Sir George Stucley's yacht, the *Deerhound*. They visited the Suez Canal at the moment of its opening; they beheld

the last hours of French gaiety and glory, before the horrors of the year of dread. They saw the letting out of those waters of strife, the rush of the Mediterranean into the Red Sea; they saw the beginning of evils, we may say, for the East and the West blended their currents irreconcilable, and the war of their ideals and interests, of French and English interests also, began in that year. It is perhaps more easy to moralise the theme now than it was then. At least the diarist moralised very little. But it seems well to present a few pages from his diary: part of his picture of Gibraltar, of Egypt, of the splendid ruinous ceremonial; and to add certain notes of the brief tour in Greece. At last he saw the old centre of the world's life, the ruined and fireless altar of art, of politics, of democracy. With this preface, his words may speak for themselves, telling their own story of interesting impressions in his own fresh and unaffected manner:—

There is something very strange in this yacht life. One feels so cut off from all one's ordinary life, and from all home interests. Beyond occasionally thinking how all are at Pynes, I never turn my mind to anything in England; and yet one does nothing, and almost thinks of nothing, instead of one's usual avocations. The days are short, and one spends them chiefly on deck, reading a little in a desultory way, and looking at the sea and the sky. When it becomes dark it is hard to read by the dim swinging lamp, which confuses one's sight, and is bad for the eyes; so we play whist a little and chess a little, and stay on deck and look at the stars and the coast lights a good deal. It is a time which ought to be excellent for thinking in, and yet it is curious how little I seem to think. I suspect the ladies are right in saying that a man can do without thinking at all, which they maintain that the female sex cannot. I find myself often in the condition of the jolly young waterman, who "rowed along thinking of nothing at all."

As we rode out, and looked back on the Rock, it seemed as if it were full of sand-martins' holes, the sand-martins

being, however, neither more nor less than artillery. What a sight a general discharge from the whole face of the Rock would be! Just within our lines we saw the spot where a new and apparently inexhaustible supply of fresh water has been discovered within the last three months, a most seasonable discovery in this singularly arid year. There has been no rain here, except one shower on Monday week, since February. The water is being forced up from the new source to the Moorish tower, high above the town, which can thus be readily supplied. The only drawback is, that it is supposed that the water is too near the cemetery; and there are some searchings of heart as to its salubrity. The road over what is called the neutral ground reads us a lesson as to the relations between Spain and England. Our people were anxious to make it, but to this Spanish pride would not consent. "They would make it," only they didn't. At last the new provisional Government, which is paying much attention to this neighbourhood, and has allowed houses to be built and improvements made near the Spanish lines, contrary to the traditional policy of their predecessors, took up the road question and sent an engineer to make it. The engineer came, saw, but did not conquer the difficulty. He was in want of implements. Would we lend him some? "Certainly," said the Governor, and the implements were lent. The next thing was the material. Could we let them have any stone? "That wasn't in the bargain," said the Governor; "but you shall have the stone." Then came the portage of the stone. Would we be good enough to haul it for them? We did, and then the Spaniards made the road. Captain Monsell told me that the Governor of Algesiras calls himself also "Governor of Gibraltar, now in the temporary possession of the English." Our occupation must be galling to the Spanish nation; but it seems to be popular with the Spaniards in the neighbourhood, who thrive upon us. We saw some women in the neutral ground filling their stockings with snuff and tobacco, which they had bought duty-free in Gibraltar, and were trying thus to smuggle into Spain!

Nov. 9.—I found myself at Valetta when I woke, and

was able to form my first idea of it very favourably. The harbour is very fine, and the town extremely striking. We are lying at the entrance to the Dockyard Creek, at the head of which are the Admiralty offices, the dry docks, &c. Beyond us, on the other side of a headland, is the Mercantile Creek, and beyond that the Great Harbour. Behind us, between us and the open sea, are two smaller creeks. All these are on the left hand of a person entering the harbour. On the right hand is the principal part of the town, with the Cathedral, Governor's Palace, and other buildings. The fortifications are all cut out of the solid rock, and look imposingly strong. The town is clean-looking and highly picturesque, and the harbour is alive with small craft, but is just now quite empty of large ships, our fleet having gone to Port Said. We were much struck by the contrast between this clean, prosperous, busy port, and the dirty, faded dinginess of Cartagena. Here we have living England, there dead Carthage and asphyxiated Spain. I don't think any one who has seen Gibraltar and Malta can look with complacency on the ideas of our modern economists of the Goldwin Smith school. The first thing that struck me in the morning was the number and fine tone of the bells which were chiming in the town. The next thing was the number and pertinacity of the boatmen, who on one pretence or other were swarming round our yacht. A short experience of Valetta throws much light upon the natural history of bluebottles, which are obviously Maltese in a state of transmigration. They cluster round one both at sea and on shore, buzz incessantly, and settle on one point as fast as one drives them from another. The Governor said the island was capable in a very good year of producing grain enough for its own consumption. He told us we were popular in the country but not in the town, which he thought unreasonable, as the expenditure of our fleet and army amounts to not less than £700,000 a-year. One cannot look at the crowded town, however, without thinking what intense misery a siege would bring upon them. It would be a very much more serious affair here than at Gibraltar. The Governor said the island was over-popu-

lated, and that there was not much emigration from it, though the people would go off to Africa or elsewhere to push their fortunes for a time, usually returning to Malta when anything went wrong with them.

Nov. 16.—*Finis coronat opus*, after all, and now we have reached Port Said—and just in the very nick of time—we have no more to say in the way of grumbling. The forest of masts which we soon began to see in the distance was a clear indication of our course, and by-and-by we perceived the long low line of the breakwater which forms one side of the harbour, and which consists of large blocks of hewn stone thrown loosely on one another. As we drew nearer we saw that most of the ships were “dressed,”—that is, decorated with a profusion of flags, most of them bearing the French and the Turkish colours, as well as their national ones,—an example which we subsequently followed. French ships were greatly in the majority, but there were plenty of Austrian, Prussian, Italian, Swedish, Greek, Spanish, and other vessels, besides of course many Turks. Seeing our English squadron lying rather outside the harbour, we made first towards it, and Sir G. and I got into our boat and went on board the Admiral’s ship (the Lord Warden); but found that Sir A. Milne had just gone on shore to learn the arrangements, about which the officers could tell us nothing, having only arrived last night. They said the French Empress had just come, and that the dressing of the ships and the saluting was in her honour. We returned to the yacht, and felt our way into the harbour, soundings being from 5 to 3 fathoms, in which depth we anchored. The health boat soon came alongside, and while our papers were being got ready, the officer told us that the ceremonies were to begin at three o’clock with the “*bénédiction des eaux*.” We got some lunch, and got into our boat about one, and made our way to the Viceroy’s yacht, where I sent up my name and Sir George’s to Nubar Pasha. We went on board, and Nubar was very polite, and apologised for the hasty reception the Viceroy must give us, as he had to dress for a visit before the ceremony. The Viceroy came up and shook hands with us very graciously, and led us into his state cabin, where

he seated himself and placed us by him. He thanked us for taking the trouble to come, and we of course said something complimentary about the Canal. He told us Mr Elliott had arrived; but that he had seen nothing of Lord Dudley, whom he expected. After a few minutes he got up, and we followed him out of the cabin and took our leave. Nubar Pasha told us about the arrangements for to-morrow. We then left the ship, and almost immediately fell in with the Empress Eugenie's boat, in which she was being towed about the harbour by a small steam-launch. It was very pretty to see all the ships manning their yards as she passed among them, and to hear the cheering and saluting and the "*Partant pour la Syrie.*" In fact, the whole scene was gay and cheerful far beyond our conceptions. We made our way to the place where the benediction was to take place, and landed at the end of a long lane of soldiers. Not being in uniform, and not having much brass, we were at first ordered behind the lines; but afterwards perceiving that many people in plain clothes got better places, we appealed to an officer, and by giving my card and using Nubar Pasha's name, we got in front and into an excellent position. The various personages who were to take part in the ceremony passed close to where we were standing, and we were able to speak to Colonel Stanton, Sir A. Milne, and some others of the English party, including the omnipresent Lord Houghton. The crowd was a very well-behaved one, and there was no pushing. A few specimens of the common British snob were to be discovered by a careful observer, and it was remarked that a female of the species was particularly edified by hearing the Empress blow her nose,—a touch of nature which obviously made the two ladies kin. The Emperor of Austria, Queen of Holland, &c., passed by, and a good many *diplomates*; also a band of Moslem priests, and another of Greek or Coptic ecclesiastics. Dr Russell of course was among the procession, with as many orders on his breast as there are advertisements in the second column of the '*Times.*' As we were not near enough to see much of the ceremony itself, we made our way into the town, and walked about its great sandy

streets, picking up shells as we went. Fancy picking up shells in Regent Street or the Rue de Rivoli! The place has a great deal of the French element in it. We were struck by the extreme indifference of the Arabs to all the gay doings on the port side: they were sitting lazily in the back streets, looking as if they thought the procession might come to them if it liked, but they wouldn't go to the procession. By the way, did Mohammed intend his famous mountain saying as a moral lesson to his followers? Very likely. They seem lazy enough to need it, but there is a quiet dignity about them which seems to affect all around. Even the French here are civil. We returned to dinner, and drank the Viceroy's health in a bottle of champagne, and then went out to enjoy the illuminations. Our position near the entrance of the port gave us an excellent view of the general effect of the lighting up, and most striking it was. Most of the ships hoisted strings of coloured lamps, and many of them carried their lights along every line of their hull, masts, and rigging. The Viceroy's magnificent yacht and the Mohammed Ali man-of-war looked as if their outline had been drawn with a fiery pencil against the dark background of the evening sky. The oil-lamps were here and there diversified by the brilliant magnesian light, and the whole scene was enlivened by flights of rockets and Roman candles, now from one quarter, now from another. We got into the boat and rowed among the ships, admiring something fresh at every turn. There were some good *feux d'artifice* on the shore beyond the Viceroy's yacht, and near to the two great obelisks which stand like Jachin and Boaz at the mouth of the Canal, and the long low ridge of the breakwater was lit up with a grand row of bonfires. The effect of all this golden light below was to make the moon look more silvery than ever. One could not help thinking of all that she has witnessed in this marvellous land, and wondering whether the present great work was to be a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰῶν*,¹ or is destined to pass away like its predecessor Pharaoh-Necho's canal. Of the seven wonders of the Old World, the Pyramids are the

¹ An everlasting possession.

only remaining one, and now Egypt may boast the possession at once of the oldest and of the newest of the great works of man. Soon after we had returned to our ship we were visited by an officer of the port, who took our name and the draught of the vessel, and told us he would come in the morning and give us our *billet de départ* and our instructions.

Nov. 17.—Precisely as the sun rose we heard a salute of twenty-one guns, which we presumed to signify the starting of the Viceroy's vessel. It was to be followed by those of the Empress, the Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, and so on. Our friend of last night came and told us we were to have the eighteenth place, and were to follow the Dido, an English vessel carrying a number of passengers, which came in just before us yesterday. Sir George was indignant at being told to follow a merchant-vessel, and we went on shore to remonstrate; but the captain of the port could give us no redress, saying that the arrangements had been made by M. Lesseps, and that we might make our complaint to him at Ismailia. We found that sixty-four vessels expected to go through the Canal, so we had reason to be well pleased with our place, which we afterwards found was ahead of most of the other yachts and of many of the ships of war. At about eleven we were told to be ready to start; but it was twelve o'clock before we were fairly within the Canal, and for some time our progress was exceedingly slow, owing to the stoppages ahead. Each vessel was ordered to keep three cables' lengths (600 yards) behind its precursor, and it was desirable to keep at a greater distance from the smoky funnel of the Dido. The ship behind us was a French man-of-war. After a time we made better progress; still, however, coming to occasional halts, as for instance is the case at the moment I am writing (5 P.M.), when there seems to be a regular block in the line. The Canal is truly wonderful. The first portion of it runs along the bank of the great Lake Menzaleh, from which it is separated by a low bank of sand which has been thrown up, and which looks as if a gale would blow it all away. It is a sort of "sandy

ridge," which might be set off against the pebbly ridge at Northam. The lake was at one part literally alive with sea-fowl, and must have a large quantity of fish to attract so many. We saw an ibis (at least some of us did), and afterwards (all of us) the dead body of another. After leaving Lake Menzaleh, the Canal soon comes to a great expanse of real desert, and the first effect of a desert view is really striking. Sand and sandhills as far as the eye can reach, and, the imagination adds, a great deal further, give one more of the idea of being cut off from the world beyond than does an equal expanse of blue sea. The day has been delicious in point of temperature, though for an hour or two the sun was rather too hot. We sat on the top of the deck-house most of the day, and enjoyed our existence. Towards six o'clock our friend the Dido begins to show signs of uneasiness; we stop; presently he begins to go astern, and calls out to us that a vessel of war is aground in front of us. We back a little, on which up comes our French friend from behind, nearly running us down, and showing great unwillingness to accept the situation. For some time we are in a ticklish position, sometimes drifting on to the bank, sometimes backing into the Frenchman, sometimes running up towards the Dido, sometimes anchoring. At last one of the little pony screw steam-launches which run about everywhere, puffing and fussing as if they were Pluto's policemen, came by with the welcome news, "On peut passer." In due time we saw the Dido go by two large ships which were aground on the right-hand bank, and with due care we followed, and having cleared them went down to dinner, leaving the captain in charge on deck. Presently we heard a palaver, which proved to be an application from some of the Dido's passengers who had been disporting themselves in her boat during the stoppage and had been left behind by their own vessel, that we would take them in tow; but the captain declined, as we had quite enough to do with looking after ourselves. After dinner we went up again, and found we were nearing Lake Timsah, on which stands Ismailia. The Canal is here very crooked, and much care was re-

quired in the steering. Meantime the sun had long set, and though we had a bright full moon, it was difficult to see the posts which marked the course, besides which, some of them had been carried away by our forerunners. Numerous rockets and Roman candles were going up at Ismailia, and we could perceive that the *fêtes* had begun; but a more personal interest was awakened in our minds by the sight of another large vessel aground in front of us. The *Dido* (which had a pilot on board) seemed to pass her easily, and we thought we should do the same, and ran on abreast of her, noticing that she was the *Vulcan*, a vessel of the Austrian Lloyd's. Just as we thought ourselves safely by, we felt our keel touch the bottom, and in another moment we were "stuck in the mud." The crew of the *Vulcan* set up a chuckle such as we may imagine the celestial godfather of their vessel would have indulged in if he had seen Mars stumble and break his leg; but they chuckled a little too soon. "Helm amidships! Back her hard! Stop her! Go ahead hard! Helm hard a-port—stand ready to go hard a-starboard! Drop the boat! Go full speed!" Our boat is lowered just in time to prevent its catching the *Vulcan's* port side, and our foremast touches the extremity of the *Vulcan's* yards. We go by so close that we could have shaken hands with her captain, but he probably was in no mood for such friendly demonstrations. We pass two more large vessels immediately ahead of the *Vulcan*, but these very easily, and in another minute we are in Lake Timsah. To find one's self suddenly in a great lake of which one had never heard, except in connection with the works of this Canal, and to see a grand expanse of water with a brilliantly illuminated city extending along a long line of its coast, some fifteen illuminated ships lying in front, a blaze of fireworks along the shore and among the ships, and then our own path through the water marked out for us by two rows of fire-buoys, had the most magical effect, and we could scarcely speak to one another for some time. Everything seemed to have been admirably arranged, and if only the captain had had more time to study the charts which had been given us as we started,

or if we had had a pilot on board, we should have dropped into our place as easily as possible; but the steering during the day had occupied his whole time and attention, and the chart by which he was working was misleading without the others, and we steered for the wrong red light, supposing ourselves to be going to our berth, but in truth running straight for the sandbanky shore. Lake Timsah is shallow; the Canal has been cut through it, and two or three *gares* have been hollowed out, where vessels may lie, but if you get out of the track of the Canal and are not in one of the *gares*, you are on the sandbanks. And such was our fate. We found ourselves in rapidly shoaling water, and close on shore, before we knew where we were. While we were perplexing ourselves over our situation, and trying to look at the chart and the fireworks both at once, one of the little steam-launches hailed us. "Quel numéro, messieurs?" "Numéro dix-huit." "Vous êtes très mal-placés; vous allez échouer; comment est-ce que vous vous trouvez là?" "Je ne sais pas," was all we could answer. "Eh, bien, suivez-moi," and off he set at some ten miles an hour. Now it is all very well for a little gentleman on the right side of a sandbank to say to a stout gentleman on the wrong side, "Suivez-moi," and to go off at railroad pace; but it is quite another thing for the gentlemen on the wrong side to follow the advice, and we had some half-hour more of trouble and soundings to go through before we got into deep water, by which time our friend had come back, and at length conducted us safely to our moorings, to which we made ourselves fast about ten o'clock, and rejoiced in our good fortune. If we were eighteenth in starting, we must have been the thirteenth to enter the lake, for we had passed five vessels.

Nov. 18.—Ismailia by daylight is not Ismailia as we saw it illuminated last night; but it is wonderful enough. A few years ago there was nothing here but a swamp, which in summer was nearly dried up, and which was honoured with the name of Lake Timsah on account of the number of crocodiles which frequented it. The cutting of the

Canal has let the waters of the Mediterranean into it, and has converted it from a fresh-water swamp into a salt lake about two miles square. At the same time the officers of the Canal administration have found it a convenient spot for their own residence, as being half-way between Port Said and Suez; they therefore commenced building here in 1862, and brought a canal of fresh water from the Nile for the use of their settlement on the barren sand. This water they have used in one part of the town for irrigation, and have created a garden well filled with plants and flowers. A railway, too, has now been made, which connects the place with Cairo and Suez. The Khedive has built himself a *châlet*, and we hear that English residents at Suez come up to Ismailia in "the season" for the sake of society. The town has an odd mixture of Orientalism and Gallicanism about it. There seem to be some tolerable shops, and some of the houses look as if they were pleasant to live in. No doubt, if the expectations of the Canal Company are realised, Ismailia will in time become an important place. At the present moment it is hard to disentangle the special preparations for these *fêtes* from the normal condition of the town. A great effort has been made, and large sums expended (thrown away, one might say) to dress up the place for a couple of nights' reception. A large building has been erected for a State ball, capable of accommodating 2000 or 3000 persons properly, and (as we have since found) of having 5000 crammed into it; and other like decorations have been provided. But the most striking feature of these arrangements is, the summoning of a host of Arab chiefs from Upper Egypt to come and encamp on the long sandy beach which divides the town from the lake, in order, as we were told, that they might "exercise hospitality" towards the guests of the Pasha, though we did not clearly make out the meaning of this phrase. The spectacle they present is by far the most interesting part of the sights which have been provided for us. Their encampment extends for more than a mile along the shore, running the whole length of the town, between the lake and the fresh-water canal, which latter is cut parallel to the lake; and there are numerous tents

also on the town side of the canal. Some of them are, I believe, provided for the guests of the Viceroy, for whom accommodation cannot be otherwise found; others are refreshment tents, into which it seems that any one may enter, call for what he likes, and accept it at the Viceroy's hands. We did not like to avail ourselves of this munificent hospitality, but there seemed to be a good many Franks who were enjoying it. Several of the Arabs made signs to us to enter their tents as we passed among them; but we were too shy, particularly as we had a lady in our party, and did not know whether she would be welcome. Moreover, we were puzzled about our shoes, observing that all the Arabs had deposited their slippers at the tent-doors, a process which would not have been very convenient to us, while at the same time we should not have liked to defile their handsome carpets with our sandy feet. It was a wonderful sight to see this great host of dwellers in the wilderness thus brought together under our eyes. Of course it is not the same thing as seeing them at home in the desert, but in many respects we got an idea of their tent-life. We saw plenty of camels, asses, and horses among the tents, some cows also, and a number of turkeys and other poultry. We noticed their mode of tethering the horses, their squatting round their tents, their manner of eating and of smoking, their prostrations, and other things of which we had been reading all our lives. Altogether the sight was worth coming all this way to see, if it had been the only thing to reward us.

We began the morning with a swim in the lake. Shortly before breakfast-time Lieutenant Hoare came over from the Admiral's vessel to ask if he could be of any use to us. He gave us such information as he possessed respecting the arrangements for the future *fêtes*, &c., and told us the Empress was impatient of "these little oriental balls," and wanted to get on a donkey and ride in the desert. Her Imperial Majesty seems to be enjoying herself immensely, but is not allowed to go anywhere beyond the reach of the telegraph, and is expecting an early summons back to France. She says, "I cannot understand how your Queen has such a nice country as India, and never

goes there; I should be always going there if it were mine." The way the Viceroy has been spending his (or his people's) money on these *fêtes* is marvellous. At Cairo he has laid out 5,000,000 francs in setting up an opera-house and a circus for them, and is paying £1000 a-week to the opera company, besides a heavy contribution to the circus. At Port Said he wanted a palace for the occasion, and gave orders for its immediate erection. "How long can you give us?" "Five days"—and it was done in the time. Truly we are in the country of Aladdin. It seems the Viceroy nearly stopped the whole of the procession after all. He was so anxious to be off in good time that he started at twelve o'clock on Tuesday night; but before he had gone very far his vessel ran aground, and the crew could not get her off. He was in great agitation, but at last took to his boat, went back to Port Said, collected about 300 men in the middle of the night ("Je faisais un peu capitaine moi-même," he said), and by force got the ship afloat about an hour before the Empress (who started at nine) came up. After our breakfast we went and called on the Admiral, and saw him and Lady Milne, Mr and Mrs Elliott, and Colonel Stanton. While we were on board, Lord Dudley, Lord Houghton, Mr Vivian, and many other visitors made their appearance, and we had a pleasant chat over all our adventures and plans. A gentleman belonging to Reuter's Telegraph Company was on board, and we got him to telegraph our arrival to the English newspapers, and also to bespeak us rooms at the New Hotel at Cairo, where, however, it seems to be a great chance whether we shall get any. After leaving the Admiral's vessel we went on shore, and walked about the town and the Arab encampment for some hours. The *mélange* of Franks and Orientals was curious enough, and we saw some queer figures of our own countrymen, and of Frenchmen and Germans, careering about on donkeys and camels, and occasionally on horses, with Arabs keeping up with them at a long swinging run. There was something in the free carriage of the Arabs and their upright figures that reminded me of the Highlanders. They are certainly some of nature's gentlemen. The Empress passed us with

a party, all riding on dromedaries. She looked as if she was enjoying herself exceedingly. Soon afterwards came a small sort of omnibus drawn by eight dromedaries, one leading, then two, then three, then two wheelers, each dromedary having a separate rider. We could not see who was in the vehicle. As we returned to our boat, we saw a body of troops marching along the main street—first a regiment of the Viceroy's Zouaves, looking very French, and then three squadrons of cavalry, two of them lancers, the third carrying carbines. The band which accompanied the latter played a tune which must have been invented to make life such a burden as to inspire the most cowardly soldier to rush into the ranks of the enemy and die to get it out of his ears. The troops formed at the landing-place where our boat was lying, and received the Empress and the Emperor of Austria, who had apparently ridden to the other end of the lake and taken boat there. In the evening the Jenkinsons and I went to the ball, Sir George wisely staying on board. We wrapped up well, for it was cold in the boat. We went to the landing-place near the ball-room, and finding no carriage, we walked up the sandy road—a new experience in ball-going—for about a quarter of a mile. (Baron Beust, we heard, went up on a donkey!) The ball was a plain-dress one, and the invitations frightfully in excess of the accommodation. We liked it as well as one likes that sort of thing, and sympathised with the Empress's saying, "Oh, if they were oriental balls, I should like them well enough; but they are only bad imitations of European ones." It was like giving one gooseberry-wine by way of champagne, when it would have been easy to give excellent beer, and the beer would have been the better article. The only noticeable feature in the scene was a few sheikhs, who looked picturesque. Spencer Ponsonby was in the room, and of course highly contemptuous over the arrangements.

Dec. 4.—A most delicious, bright, fresh morning. Our voyage through the Archipelago would have been thoroughly perfect if only Sir George and Madame had been well enough to enjoy it with us. We left Syra about

4 A.M. When I got up I found we were passing between Ceos (the birthplace of Simonides) and Cythnos, leaving Gyara (*aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris et carcere dignum*) on our right hand. The outlines of both islands were good, especially that of Ceos; but there was not a trace of human life to be seen on their bare sides. There is a town, and there are said to be a good many remains of ancient structures, in Ceos, but not on the side we saw. As we passed on, we began to make out Sunium (C. Colonna), and altered our course so as to run close under it and get a view of the beautiful ruined temple which crowns the height. I looked up the passage in the 'Ajax':—

“γενοίμαν ἴν' ὑλᾶεν ἔπεισι πόντου
 πρόβλημα' ἀλίλυστον, ἄκραν
 ὑπὸ πλάκα Σουνίου,
 τὰς ἱερὰς ὄπως
 προσείπομεν Ἀθήνας.”¹

But we could see no wood to represent the ὑλᾶεν πρόβλημα. Byron's "Place me on Sunium's marbled steep" is more suggestive of the present state of the promontory, with its striking edifice, the detached fragments of marble scattered all around, and the marked air of solitude that prevails. Indeed, throughout this morning's sail nothing has struck us more than the total absence of all signs of human life on shore, and, with the exception of three or four little boats, on the sea too. As we approached Sunium, the southern end of Eubœa loomed large upon us, and we greatly admired its fine outline. Andros showed itself in the distance. At length, as we cleared the end of Macronissi (Helena) we for a few moments caught sight of Cape Marathon, far up the strait, but very distinct; and I ran over the charge of the Athenians, and the attempt of the Persians at the *coup de main* after their defeat, when the shield was held up to them, and they sailed round Cape Sunium to attack the city,

¹ Set me where the wooded sea-worn cape hangs o'er the deep beneath "the rocky brow" of Sunium, that there I might cry, Holy Athens, hail! —Soph., 'Ajax,' 1219.

but were outmarched by Miltiades; and I tried to people the vacant sea with the galleys and triremes, and wished I had Arthur Hobhouse here to go through it all with. *Ægina* was the next interesting object, and I could not help thinking that there was something in the cocked-up-nose look of its conical hill which must have been very aggravating to the Athenians, and made the "Eyesore of the Piræus" doubly trying. It reminded me a little of —'s *nez-en-air*. But *Ægina* is an interesting island too; and the whole Gulf of Athens, as one enters it, is very beautiful, and one quite feels how it must have awakened the enthusiastic love of its ancient people, and how the Athenians might well look upon the whole of it (and not their town alone) as their home, and might feel themselves not at all expatriated when they deserted the Acropolis and betook themselves to their ships. The first view of the Acropolis itself is decidedly disappointing. I could not believe it was the Acropolis. In the first place, I had not taken into consideration the height of the mountains which surround it, and which give it the effect of a building in a plain. Pentelicus and Hymettus are as high as Snowdon, and Parnes is higher than either of them. Seeing the Acropolis, as we did, at a great distance, and at broadside, and not being able to distinguish the Parthenon from the fortifications, we could think of nothing but a great new house, or railway station, with an elevated centre (the Parthenon, as it proved), and two long wings. But as we came nearer, and got a more angular view and could by degrees make out the pillars of the Parthenon and distinguish buildings from rock, we altered our opinion, and admired duly; and when we got the Parthenon against the sky-line, we admired greatly. Still it did not *exceed* my expectations. The sun was just setting ("behind Morea's hills") as we entered the Piræus, and we admired greatly the rich purple glow which it threw over Pentelicus and Hymettus. We must to-morrow make out the different features of the place more clearly than we did as we came in.

Dec. 5.—Jenkinson and I went on shore after breakfast, and took the train to Athens (trains go every hour, and

take about fifteen minutes, fare, *πρώτης θέσεως*,¹ one drachma), found ourselves rather too early for church (but saw the Queen go into the Russian Church) so took a turn round the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Olympius, which are very fine. One of the pillars, which was thrown down by a hurricane some years ago and lies broken in fragments, gives one an opportunity of more closely examining the beautiful carving of the capitals, as well as of seeing the mode in which the separate blocks of marble were put together. We wished the little monk's sentry-box, put up by the Venetians, could be taken away. It is very ugly, and it looks as if it might come down some day and damage the columns in its fall. It would be no harm if the fortifications round the Acropolis were taken down also. On our way to the Stadium we crossed the Ilissus, which contains about as much water as the stream in the Burleycombe probably contains at this moment.

The walls which have been laid bare at the end of the Stadium show the contour very perfectly; but we could not decide whether they marked the course itself, or the place appropriated to the spectators. The space between them is too narrow for two chariots to pass one another, but it might have done for foot-races. It is said that one or two statues have been discovered. The King is making these excavations at his own expense, but can ill afford to spend much out of his £40,000 a-year. His late Royal and Imperial visitors must have drawn rather heavily on his purse. On our way to the Dionysia we looked again at the temple of Jupiter, and at Hadrian's arch, with its inscription on one side, *Αἰὶς εἰς Ἀθῆναι, Θεσεῶς ἡ πρὶν πόλις*,² and on the other, *Αἰὶς Ἀδριανοῦ, κοῦχ' Θεσεῶς, πόλις*.³

The Dionysia is extremely interesting. There is a great deal of good carving lying about. We looked at the inscriptions on the seats, all the principal of which appear to be appropriated to different priests, heralds, and Thesmothetæ. I doubted whether the inscriptions were as

¹ First class.

² Lo, Athens now, but Theseus' city once.

³ Lo, Hadrian's now, and Theseus' town no more.

old as the seats. Some certainly were quite modern—*i.e.*, of the time of Trajan, whose name appeared on one in the second row; another bears the name of Marcus Aurelius.

Dec. 6.—We were much delighted with everything we saw to-day. Some of the sepulchral monuments collected in the Theseum are very beautiful and touching, especially (I thought) one which I supposed to represent a lady dying after her confinement, taking leave of all her family, and with the baby held up near her. The effigy of Aristocles, who brought the news of the victory at Marathon and fell dead in the Agora, is interesting, and has the appearance of being a good likeness. There was a little figure of Pan with which we were greatly charmed. And I lost my heart to an *Cedipus* and *Antigone*, which has been recently placed there. None of these sculptures, however, are at all to compare in point of beauty with the lovely fragment of *Phidias* in the Temple of the Wingless Victory—the one from which the Yankee broke off the foot, a piece of vandalism only paralleled, I am sorry to say, by that of a young English midshipman, who some sixteen or eighteen years ago broke off the head of an *Athene* in (I think) the *Erechtheum*. He was detected, and the head was taken out of his berth, but it has not been replaced. I was greatly tempted to pick up one of the myriad fragments with which the ground was covered, and asked the guard's permission to take one, but he would not allow me to take what had been even touched by a chisel. I was allowed a little fragment of marble, which I must bestow on Arthur.¹ I took our guide to task for talking of *Minerva* and *Jupiter* in this classic city, and in this classicising age, and begged him to stick to *Athene* and *Zeus*, but he did not seem to think the public would appreciate his accuracy. The pronunciation of the modern Greek brings me to shame, and I have wholly failed to understand, or make myself understood by, the shopkeepers, though *Angelo* (the guide) and I got on very well in puzzling out inscriptions and so on together. The reaction towards classicism does not seem

¹ Fourth son of Sir Stafford.

to have penetrated very low down in the social scale yet. We were horrified to find that the Government are actually re-erecting a hideous modern building, intended for a museum, on the Acropolis itself, close to the very Parthenon. Its instant demolition ought to be insisted on by united Europe, and war declared if it is not effected within a month. I was amused at seeing the clock erected by the marbled Lord Elgin, as some compensation to Athens for his robbery of the Parthenon. It stands near the Temple of the Winds, and is very conspicuous. Athens is far more interesting than I had expected. The remains are more numerous and beautiful; and the compactness of the place adds greatly to its charm. One cannot help saying to one's self, when one observes the smallness of the space covered by the Acropolis, the Pnyx, the Agora, and the other salient points which have shed a lustre over the history of the world, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

Sir Stafford left the yacht party at Malta, Dec. 14, after a rough passage from Athens, and proceeded to Marseilles by P. & O. His diary says:—

"Dec. 20.—Left Hotel Windsor at 8. Crossed from Boulogne to Folkestone, and reached Charing Cross about 7.30, dined at the hotel, and then walked up to Mrs Hobhouse's, where I heard that I had been the talk of the town all day, the 'Daily News' and 'Morning Post' having voted that I was drowned. Assured her that I hadn't been dead at all, and went to give Harry and Henrietta Lushington the same comfort.

"Wrote to Pynes: The Duke's motto, 'I am here.'" At Mrs Hobhouse's, Sir Stafford, on presenting himself after the rumour of his death, was taken by the servant for a ghost!

"Dec. 21.—A thoroughly miserable London day. Doubtful whether I should not have been as well off at the bottom of the Mediterranean. Called on Lady E. Stucley, and gave her all our news."

Sir Stafford had some correspondence with the editor of one of the papers afterwards, on the unintentional

cruelty involved in putting in unascertained pieces of bad news.

He reached Pynes on December 22.

"Longæ finis chartæque viæque."

CHAPTER XII.

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS AND THE TREATY OF WASHINGTON.

ON Monday, 13th February 1871, Lord John Manners met Sir Stafford as he was leaving the House of Commons, and told him that he was being looked for in the lobby by Lord Granville. Sir Stafford went back, and was asked whether he would join the Commission which had already set sail for America to arrange the Treaty of Washington. In five days Sir Stafford, with his sons Henry and John, was on board the *Russia*—a Cunard steamer. On March 1 they reached New York, and were greeted by the usual imaginative emissary of the 'New York Herald.' They went straight on to Washington, where Sir Stafford joined the other British Commissioners—Lord de Grey, Lord Tenterden, Sir E. Thornton our Ambassador, Mr Montague Bernard of All Souls, and the Canadian Commissioner, Sir John A. Macdonald.

The purpose of the Commission was to settle terms of agreement about the Alabama and similar claims, about the Canadian fisheries, about San Juan, and other matters—terms which might be referred to a court of arbitration.

As to there being no alternative at that moment but war on one hand or apology and arbitration on the other, Sir Stafford wrote to Mr Disraeli (January 24, 1873): "Our work has not been made more palatable by persons who have spoken as though the alternative had been war. *There was no such alternative*; and if it had been present to the Government, they ought to have taken a totally different tone, and doubtless would." The real alternative was an eternal hostility of feeling.

Judging by Sir Stafford's letters and diary, the Presidential election was the mainspring of the whole machine of the Commission. Was General Grant to be re-elected? Much appeared to depend on the successful American conduct of the Commission. I gather (these are private inferences) that the American Government wanted as considerable a triumph as possible, as conspicuous a defeat of England, without the disturbance and discomfort of actual hostilities. Mr Charles Sumner, who had just been removed from the American Committee of Foreign Relations, was regarded as the great anti-Englishman. It is only fair to say that, during the sitting of the Commission, his attitude was friendly and genial. Foibles he had, caused or increased by the long excitement of the war against slavery; and, it may be, by the cowardly assault on him several years before, by a Southern planter and politician. Despite these foibles, his relations with the Commissioners were distinctly friendly.

Before entering on the social and diplomatic adventures at Washington, it may be well to note what intentions and ideas Sir Stafford, for his part, had in his mind. He conceived, as he wrote to Lord Beaconsfield, that here was a chance for neutral, maritime, and commercial nations to come to an understanding as to the rights and duties of neutrals. England and America might give the effect of an international agreement to those parts of their municipal law which were common to both countries. They might agree on a definition of contraband of war, and might sketch a tribunal to settle disputed points. Other Powers might accede to the treaty, and be represented on the tribunal. A mode of settling the claims and counter-claims arising out of the late war might be devised "without admitting any inconvenient pretensions." "These ideas," he adds, "are rough-hewn."

The Commissioners of either side, at Washington, had some private intercourse, and euchre, before business regularly began. At this semi-official euchre they seem to have played "for love." On March 8, Mr Fish, for the Americans, opened the Alabama claims, proposing that they should try to agree to certain principles of inter-

national law, to be applied by themselves, or by the arbitrators. On March 9, the English produced their counter-proposals; "another long wrangle, and — exhibits great powers of twaddling." It may be said that this Commissioner was not of our party. On the former day (March 8) the Protocol XXXVI. sets forth, in the words of the American Commissioners, how, owing to the Alabama and other ships, "extensive *direct* losses had arisen in the capture and destruction of a large number of vessels with their cargoes, and in the heavy national expenditure in pursuit of the cruisers; and *indirect* injury" (the italics are mine) in a transfer of a large part of the American commercial marine to the British flag, in the enhanced payment of insurances, in the prolongation of the war, and in the addition of a large sum to the cost of the war, and the suppression of the rebellion. And they also showed that Great Britain,

by reason of failure in the proper observance of her duties as a neutral, had become justly liable for the acts of these cruisers and of their tenders; that the claims for the loss and destruction of private property which had thus far been presented amounted to about fourteen millions of dollars, without interest, which amount was liable to be greatly increased by claims which had not been presented; that the cost to which the Government had been put in pursuit of cruisers could be easily ascertained by certificates of Government accounting officers; *that in the hope of an amicable settlement, no estimate was made of the indirect losses, without prejudice, however, to the right to indemnification on their account, in the case of no such settlement being made.*¹

All this passage is particularly important to the history of Sir Stafford's own conduct in the mission. Without entering into the long international controversy which followed—a matter for legists—one may say that a person of ordinary wits could understand the text quoted in only one way. In the hope of an amicable settlement, the *indirect* claims were not estimated, nor, of course, presented to the arbitrators, though the right to present them, failing an amicable settlement, was reserved. An "amicable settlement" *was* made, as I understand (com-

¹ The italics are mine throughout.

pare, however, Sir Stafford's letter to Mr Fish, p. 10), and yet the Americans revived the indirect claims. However, it is no part of our duty to discuss the rights or wrongs of all this, nor to revive an ancient dispute. As may be seen, all turned on an "understanding" differently understood, and doubtless blamelessly, by the persons engaged. What we have to note is the conduct of Sir Stafford Northcote in the matter. On May 19, 1872, he delivered a speech at Exeter, in which he touched on the question of the "indirect claims"—

Two questions have been raised [he said]: one the personal question as to what was the understanding between the Commissioners at all events, and perhaps between the two Governments, at the time the treaty was concluded; the other, as to the general merits of the question which has been raised with regard to what are called consequential damages, or the indirect claims. *Now, with regard to the personal question I will only say this—that we, the Commissioners, were distinctly responsible for having represented to the Government that we understood a promise to be given that these claims were not to be put forward, and were not to be submitted to arbitration. That being so, we are, of course, brought into painful relations with, and painful questions arise between ourselves and our American colleagues upon that Commission.* It would have been most unjustifiable if, while the matter was under discussion, we had allowed any desire to make out our own case in this matter to interfere with a great international settlement going on. Whether the time will ever come for speaking fully upon the matter I do not know, and I comparatively little care.

Though these events are distant, it seems needless to add to Sir Stafford's statement.

In consequence of these remarks, made in a public speech, one of the American Commissioners, Mr Fish, complained that Sir Stafford was "seeking *aliunde* outside of the treaty or of the protocol to establish a meaning, or to explain its terms," and that this had the anticipated effect of raising "a personal question." Mr Fish then denied that "such a promise as Sir Stafford stated that the British Commissioners represented to their Government as having been understood by them to have been

made by the American Commissioners was in fact ever made."¹

Sir Stafford explained himself thus in a letter to Lord Derby:—

86 HARLEY STREET, W., June 5, 1872.

DEAR LORD DERBY,—I observe that, in your speech in the House of Lords last night, you referred to a recent statement of mine with regard to the negotiations at Washington in a manner which shows me that you, as well as many other persons, have misunderstood my meaning.

It has been supposed, and you seem to have supposed, that I said that an understanding existed between the British and the American negotiators that the claims for indirect losses should not be brought forward; and it has been inferred from this that we, relying upon that understanding, were less careful in framing the treaty than we should otherwise have been.

This is incorrect. What I said was, that we had represented to our Government that we understood a promise to have been given that no claims for indirect losses should be brought forward. *In so saying, I referred to the statement voluntarily and formally made by the American Commissioners at the opening of the Conference of the 8th of March, which I, for one, understood to amount to an engagement that the claims in question should not be put forward in the event of a treaty being agreed on.*

I will not enter into a discussion of the grounds upon which I came to that conclusion, but *will simply say that we never for a moment thought of relying upon it, or upon any other matter outside of the treaty itself.* We thought, as I still think, that the language of the treaty was sufficient, according to the ordinary rules of interpretation, to exclude the claims for indirect losses. At all events, we certainly meant to make it so.—I remain, yours very faithfully, STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

The Earl of Derby.

Perhaps you will kindly read this in the House of Lords to-morrow.

The conclusion of the matter then, is, that neither Lord de Grey nor the other Commissioners had the faintest intention of using language which admitted the indirect

¹ 'The American Commissioners,' &c. Washington Government Printing Office. 1872. P. 11.

claims.¹ But what Sir Stafford meant, in his Exeter speech, by saying "whether the time will ever come for speaking fully upon the matter, I do not know," is a question which may still puzzle us. His letter refers to the protocol only—to what did his speech refer?

¹ This letter to Mr Fish explains Sir Stafford's position :—

"MY DEAR MR FISH,—I had hoped that it would be unnecessary for me to refer again to the vexed question of the understanding upon which the Treaty of Washington was negotiated ; but the correspondence on the subject of my 'statement' before the Exeter Chamber of Commerce last May, which has just been published by the United States Government, appears to call for some notice on my part. I write now, as I spoke then, solely on my own responsibility, and without communication with my Government or my late colleagues on the Commission.

"When I said that we, the British Commissioners, were responsible for having represented to our Government that we understood a promise to have been given that what are called the indirect claims were not to be put forward by the United States, I meant to convey to my audience that I thought that our Government must have inferred from our communications with them that we understood such a promise to have been made by the American Commissioners. I did not think it right at that time to go further into particulars ; but subsequently, in my letter to Lord Derby of the 5th June, which is included in your correspondence, I explained that the occasion to which I referred, as that on which I supposed the promise to have been made, was the conference of the 8th March 1871.

"You say, and all our American colleagues on the late Commission say with you, that no such promise was made on that occasion. I of course unhesitatingly accept your assurance that it was not your intention to make one, and that you did not consider that you had made one. I cannot, however, admit that there was anything unreasonable in the precisely opposite inference which I, at all events, drew from what passed on that day, confirmed as that inference was by our proceedings on several subsequent days.

"You will remember that it had been arranged that on the 8th March the American Commissioners should state their case with respect to the Alabama and the other vessels. This you did in a written paper, which you read out to us, but which you did not hand in as part of the proceedings. It was to the effect that, besides the direct losses occasioned by the cruisers, and the cost incurred in their pursuit and capture, it was believed by the United States Government that they had also a good and equitable claim for indirect or constructive losses. These latter, however, you did not prefer ; and you stated that your not doing so must be regarded as a great concession. You then proceeded, still reading from the paper, to propose that the Commissioners should endeavour to agree upon a gross sum, to be paid by Great Britain in discharge of the claims of the United States ; and you went on to say, still reading from the same paper, that, should the Commissioners be unable to arrive at an understanding for such a payment, the American Commissioners would be willing to refer the liability of Great Britain to some competent tribunal which should be empowered to assess damages. You added, however, that they

Apparently to some more "personal question," which neither his diary nor his correspondence elucidates. Sir Stafford says in a letter from Washington to Mr Disraeli, "I wish I had some of your power of reading character just now." Perhaps in this case he read character or

would at the same time expect that certain principles of international law should be laid down, to be applied to the decision of the claims of the United States, whether those claims were considered by the Commission or by such a tribunal as had been mentioned; and you propounded four articles containing the principles which you desired us to adopt. Of those four articles you gave us a copy, and we then retired for the purpose of considering your proposal in both its branches.

"Whether I was technically right in speaking of the declaration thus made as 'a promise' is a question which I will not discuss. I can only say that my impression at the time was, that you were proposing to us two alternative methods of settling the direct claims, coupling your proposal with the announcement that if either of the alternatives were adopted, the indirect claims would not be preferred. If this was not the meaning of the statement, I am at a loss to understand why the expression with regard to those claims was used at all. Of one thing I feel perfectly confident, that there was nothing in your proposal which could lead us to suppose that the indirect claims were to be waived in case of the adoption of one of your alternatives, and not in case of the adoption of the other. The proposal was made as a whole, without our interposing a word, and the four rules, which you handed to us, were stated by you to be rules which were to govern the decision equally, whichever mode of settlement was adopted. I do not think that it is correct to say that you first made one proposal, and that, when that had been rejected by us, you made another, to which the conditions of the first did not apply. Whether such an inference can be drawn from the terms of the protocol is a question upon which I will not enter; but I am quite sure that it would not be a correct account of what actually took place. Both the alternatives—the one which we rejected and the one which we in substance accepted—were laid before us at one and the same time, in one and the same proposal, originating entirely with the American side of the Commission. It is true that they were not discussed together. After we had taken them into consideration, we declined altogether, under the instructions of our Government, your proposal that a sum should be assessed by the Commissioners, and we urged you to agree to a simple arbitration, unaccompanied by any limitations. It was not till after the discussion had proceeded for a considerable time that the question of your second alternative was taken up and discussed in its turn. But I repeat that this alternative had formed part of the original proposal; and that neither was there anything in the statement you read to us which showed that the declaration with regard to the non-presentation of the indirect claims (whatever it meant) was confined to the case of the acceptance of the first alternative alone, nor did you, after we had manifested our inclination to accept the second alternative, give us any intimation that the declaration in question did not apply to that case.

"I might go on to show, by reference to several portions of our subse-

circumstances wrongly, though his power of seeing what was passing in people's minds was among his most useful qualities.

In an enterprise like that of the British Commissioners, political and social functions are so blended that it is difficult to keep their descriptions distinct. Dinner-parties, dances, receptions, and a queer kind of fox-hunt, with picnics and expeditions in the beautiful Virginia country, alternated with serious business and grave discussion. The Commissioners of either nation sat on opposite sides of a long table, and had each their private room, where they withdrew, on occasion, to deliberate among themselves. The English were fighting a triangular or even quadrilateral duel. They had to hold their own not merely with the Americans, but with the Home Government, and the representative of Canada. Of Lord de Grey Sir Stafford wrote—

"The U.S. Commissioners give him some trouble ;
He don't blame them for *that*—it's their duty, you know ;
And his Cabinet colleagues, they give almost double,—
They do it from love, and he likes it—so, so !"

The Home Government kept putting in their oar, and once—for which much may by literary persons be forgiven them—they telegraphed that, in the treaty, they would *not* endure adverbs between "to" (the sign of the infinitive) and the verb. The purity of the English language they nobly and courageously defended.

quent conferences, that we acted throughout the negotiation on the assumption that the indirect claims were not to be presented, that we used arguments at certain stages of the discussion which rested entirely on that assumption, and that you never gave us a hint that the assumption was unfounded. This, and much more, I might say if I were writing for the purpose of justifying the course of our British Commissioners in the negotiation. But I think it better, now that the matter has been set at rest for practical purposes, to confine myself to the explanation I have given of my words at Exeter ; and I will conclude by expressing my earnest hope that the misunderstandings which have caused such painful controversies as those of this last spring may not be allowed to mar the good feeling which ought to subsist between our two nations, or to make us personally forgetful of the many acts of kindness and courtesy for which we had to be grateful to our American friends, and notably to yourself, during our sojourn at Washington."

"After having with much trouble brought the Americans to agree to some form of words, and sent it home by telegraph, we receive instructions that the Government prefer a different form of words, and have to begin our battle over again, often at a disadvantage. Still the Americans keep their temper very well," Sir Stafford wrote to Mr Disraeli. As to the rules which it was finally determined to concede,—while not admitting that they were part of the law of nations during the war,—he held that they "are substantially the principles embodied in our own Foreign Enlistment Act." As to the whole conclusion, with its King of Sweden, Emperor of Brazil, and all the other parade of arbitration, he says: "The world will probably laugh; but after all it will be a good thing if we can get these troublesome matters out of the way." As to details, there was a week's wrangle over the choice of the word "constructed," or the phrase "specially prepared for war"; "upon which they must have seen that we did not mean to give way. We could not admit that a neutral nation was responsible for the 'construction' of a ship not possessing a distinctly war-like character, which is subsequently used as a ship of war." On the San Juan question, Sir Stafford would have broken up the Conference. Perhaps it is better not to state the circumstances and arguments which led him to this conclusion: they had less force with Lord de Grey. As a general rule, however, he writes: "We are on the best of terms with our colleagues, who are on their mettle and evidently anxious to do the work in a gentlemanly way, and go straight to the point. . . . I see that our friend the 'Times' is as usual trying to make mischief, and swaggering in a most unnecessary way." On Good Friday he was suffering from low spirits and telegrams from the Home Government:—

Our negotiations go on slowly, and not quite in the line I like. We shall, I suppose, come to a settlement, but I am not quite at ease as to its nature; and Bancroft Davis has just been telling Tenterden, by way of good news, that he thinks we may get the thing done in six weeks from this time! I had expected to be on the Atlantic by this time, when I left England seven weeks

ago. And as to having done in another six (or sixteen) weeks, the only chance of it that I can see lies in the possibility that the French cable also may break some fine morning and leave us isolated. If the other two cables get repaired before we go, Heaven help us! We shall not be able to respond to the American Commission's question "How do you do?" without telegraphing home for instructions, and being informed that her Majesty's Government prefer our saying "Pretty well" to our saying "Not at all well." But, as old Sir Stafford used to say, "Don't you say I told you."

On the 10th of April the Americans accepted the "expression of regret" for the escape of the Alabama, and the rest of our misdeeds. On April 22, the Canadian Commissioner "seems to think that he has stood out long enough; certainly it has been longer than our idea of long enough." On May 2, we read—

Telegram from Home Government telling us to leave Washington as soon as possible after the treaty was signed. *Quam parvula sapientiâ!* And our bill for telegrams alone is £5,000. Send strong remonstrance by telegram against insanity of Government. It would simply upset the treaty if we came away before the Senate met.

May 3 (Wednesday).—This is a day big with fate. We have this day finally settled the treaty, and have sent it to be engrossed for our signature on Monday next. Our part is now nearly done. Nothing remains but to settle the protocols embodying in a presentable form the history of the negotiation. These will give some trouble, and their wording will be important as a commentary on the treaty itself; but the great work is completed. Is it destined to live? or will the Senate smother it in its cradle? Anyhow it is matter for thankfulness that we have brought it so far, and that we shall at least have the satisfaction of thinking that we have won our spurs as negotiators. De Grey deserves even more credit than he is likely to receive. None but those who have worked with him can appreciate his merits.

May 6.—Held our last conference to-day. Confirmed the protocol, and then made flattering speeches one to another. Read over the treaty, and saw the ribbons put in, ready for sealing on Monday. Five ribbons drawn through each copy (red and blue), so that one English and one American Commissioner may seal upon each ribbon. Something like the mode of assign-

ing partners in the cotillion. We all carried off some of the ribbon as a memorial. Gave Mr Fish a copy of my Ode to the Fourth Article. Signed a number of copies of our photographs, the Americans signing theirs at the same time. A framed copy of each is to be presented to us.

May 8.—A brilliant morning. Breakfasted at nine, and walked up to the State Department at ten. The American Commissioners had arrived, and we spent some time in talk, and in exchanging a prodigious number of autographs, while the seals were being affixed to the two copies of the treaty,—a slow process, as the unfortunate clerk who prepared them was both awkward and nervous, and Tenterden did not help to put him at his ease by dropping quantities of burning sealing-wax on his fingers. The poor man was so much excited that he burst into tears at the conclusion of the affair. Howard, who did the gratuity business for us, gave him forty dollars to buy a *souvenir* for his wife, which he accepted with some reluctance. The signing seemed to create great interest in the department, and all, or most, of the employees were present. A great quantity of flowers had been sent up by different ladies, and we were abundantly supplied with strawberries and iced cream, with which we relieved our feelings after shaking hands all round. And now the breaking-up begins.

May 21 saw “our last day at Washington, and quite a melancholy one. . . . It is curious to have made one’s self so much at home there, and to have picked up so much interest in the small daily life of the place.” They departed under a final sneer from the Russian Minister, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Query—“Blessed are the humbugs!” The settlement he considered, as he wrote to Mr Disraeli, “a fair and just one, giving no triumph to either party, containing nothing dishonourable to either, and having the merit of laying down principles which may be useful in the future. . . . But I am not a fair judge.”

The rest of this letter (May 9) may be quoted as showing, if that were necessary, what in his opinion the treaty meant as to the “Indirect Claims”:—

I suppose the points which will be particularly criticised are, the insertion in the treaty of the expression of regret, the retrospective effect given to the three rules, and the Canadian arrangements. As regards the first point, I suppose we shall be told

that such an expression in such an instrument is unprecedented. I believe it is, and I do not think the Government originally intended us to insert the words in the treaty itself. But we thought ourselves that it was well to do handsomely what was to be done at all; and we felt too, that the insertion of the words in the place where they stand gave us a means of keeping out other words which the Americans were anxious to bring in with a view to establish what they call their national case. You will doubtless observe that there is significance in every line of the preamble to the first article. "*Incedit per ignes*," &c. The object is to remove and adjust "all complaints" as well as "claims." The "complaints" intended are those which bear on the "animus" of Great Britain, as evinced not only by her alleged negligence in the matter of the vessels, but also by her alleged premature recognition of the belligerency of the South; and the word covers all the allegations as to our having been responsible for the prolongation of the war, &c. The same ideas are connected with the word "differences" in the first line. You will remember that after the Clarendon-Johnson Treaty was concluded, Mr Johnson told his Government that the effect of the "general terms" which had been used would be to allow the question of premature recognition to be raised before the arbitrator. On the other hand, the Senate rejected that treaty, partly, at least, on the ground that it took cognisance only of private claims, and not of those put forward on the part of the Government of the United States. Our object was to let in the claims of the Government without letting in all those wild demands. While therefore we refer to the differences and complaints in general language, we submit to arbitration only the claims "growing out of the acts committed" by certain vessels. This limitation was not obtained without much difficulty, and could not have been obtained at all if we had not inserted the expression of regret in its present place, and then pointed out to the Americans that that expression in fact balanced, and ought to be accepted as balancing, the complaints which they had made on the score of national wrong, and that they ought to be content with a provision which would entitle them to bring forward claims founded on direct losses (such as the sinking of the *Hatteras*) without going further. Of course it is possible that they may put forward claims of greater extent, as, for instance, claims on account of the cost of pursuing and capturing the vessels; but there is nothing in the article to give direct colour to such claims, and our counsel will of course be instructed to argue that they are inadmissible if they should be presented.

Washington.

May 8. 1871

My own C,

The first and only
use I make of this pen
after signing the Treaty
with it is to send you
a notification of the
fact.

Yours devoted

Stephen A. Mitchell

As regards the three rules, and the retrospective character which has been given to them, one can only say that it is of the essence of the arrangement. The rules go very little if at all beyond what we practically admitted to be our duty by our Foreign Enlistment Act as it stood in 1861-65, and what it may be said that foreign nations cognisant of our municipal law had reasonable ground to expect of us. I think it can hardly be doubted that it is for our interest to have these rules embodied in international law, while on the other hand it was not to be expected that the Americans should consent to be bound by them for the future, if they were to derive no benefit from them as regards the past. I do not altogether like the shape the arrangement has taken. Personally I should have preferred to come frankly forward, and while denying any liability or conscious neglect of duty on the part of Great Britain, to tender a sum in order to enable the Government of the United States to make compensation for the losses sustained by American citizens, by the acts of vessels escaping from British ports, and then to have proceeded to argue upon rules for the future. But no doubt there would have been difficulty in so wording an arrangement of this kind as to make it acceptable; and I am not on the whole dissatisfied with the treaty as it stands, though it exposes us to the risk of having it declared by the arbitrators that we had failed in our duty.

As regards the Canadian arrangements, there is likely to be a complaint on the part of the fishermen, which may perhaps be taken up by some of the politicians; and we shall be told that we are sacrificing colonial to imperial interests. The complaint is, I think, wholly unfounded. I doubt whether even individual fishermen will not gain more by the right of sending their fish into the American markets duty-free than they will lose by the competition of Americans in their waters. I think that the general effect of Acts xviii. to xxxiii. is decidedly favourable to Canada, and that the only thing she loses (and that for a short term of years) is a whip which she liked to crack for the purpose of driving Americans into bargains, but which she would have been very foolish if she had attempted to use,—I mean the power of excluding American vessels from her canals. But beyond this, I am convinced that if it could truly be said that any local interests had been sacrificed for the sake of a general settlement of imperial questions, it could not be said that the interests sacrificed were those of Canada, and that the party for whose benefit the sacrifice was made was England; for I believe that no part of the empire has so direct and immediate an interest in the maintenance of friendly relations between us and the Americans

as Canada herself. We remain here another ten days, principally because the American Government wish us to pay the Senate the compliment of awaiting their discussion of the treaty, and also because they think we may be able to influence particular senators, such as the Democrats and (still more) Sumner, over whom they have no party control. I had a long talk with Sumner yesterday, and De Grey is to see him to-day. He is very cautious, but I do not think him unfriendly. He is very anxious to stand well with England; but, on the other hand, he would dearly like to have a slap at Grant. We have paid him a great deal of attention since he has been deposed, and I think he is much pleased at being still recognised as a power. He certainly is one, for though I think the Government could beat him in the Senate, he could stir up a great deal of bad feeling in the country, if he were so minded; while, on the other hand, if he declares himself satisfied, I believe every one but the Fenians and Catacazy (the Russian Minister) will be very much pleased with the settlement. Catacazy tries to make mischief, but I don't think his influence is very great now. De Grey has done his work extremely well, and has shown an amount of shrewdness, tact, and judgment, for which I was not prepared. The Cabinet have been terribly vexatious. We hope to sail on the 24th, and be in England by the 4th June.

On his return from the visit to the States, Sir Stafford was not allowed to be idle. Mr Bruce (Lord Aberdare) had invited him before leaving England to preside over the Commission which was to inquire into the working of Friendly Societies. In them he was naturally interested. As he said at Stroud ten years later, "They are admirable, because they spring from the people themselves; the scheme originally struck out by the people themselves, the difficulties faced by the people themselves, . . . and they solve problems which are really problems of statesmen."

When the Commission began its journeyings, Friendly Societies were in this position: They were certified by registrars, and tables for granting annuities were certified by an actuary. This, it was found, did not prevent the societies from being, occasionally, either fraudulently or incompetently managed. Mr Tidd Pratt, indeed, believed that the proportion of incompetent or dishonest business was terribly great. The questions arose, Could legislation

improve them? or, Should the Government certificates be dropped, as mere lures to ruin? To answer these questions, local inquiries in towns were needed, the Friendly Societies also were thought to require inspection.

In September, Sir Stafford, with his fellow-commissioners, left for Edinburgh. His domestic letters give a few particulars about his tour: "We are doing useful work," he writes from a most depressing hotel in Glasgow. "Our work is very interesting, and we rake up some queer disclosures," "discover no end of jobs." Bread and cheese were with difficulty procured on the voyage to Belfast. Dublin provided "the most luxurious hotel you can imagine." "There is a richer vein of rascality in Glasgow than one could discover at Belfast, though 'promoters had used the blessed name of St Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, to delude poor Catholics into joining a swindle.' Is it safe to add that the Commissioners found the Liffey "a beastly ditch"? At Killarney the Commissioners learned that celebrity has its taxes to pay:—

The distinction of being mounted, and accompanied not only by a gillie but by a bugler, drew upon us a tenfold share of attention, meaning solicitation, throughout the journey. The favourite requests were, 1st, that we would take a drop of mountain-dew, a compound of milk and whisky; and 2d, that we would exchange a shilling for a lucky sixpence. We accepted the mountain-dew twice—once to see what it was like, and once (by way of *doch-an-dorrock*) to "make up" a young lady's "marriage money." A very good-looking girl she was, and as merry as possible, not badly dressed, though of course without shoes or stockings, running laughing along by our side with a bottle of milk in one hand and of whisky in the other. "Shure I only want seven shillings to my marriage money. Shure ye'll take *doch-an-dorrock*. Shure the last drop's the sweetest." I need not say we were soft-hearted. Since we came in, I have been rather troubled by hearing a Canadian gentleman, who it seems is married to an Irish wife, give an account of his having bestowed a sixpence on the same Miss Bridget, and of her then falling back and conversing in Erse with her sister, not knowing that the lady understood them. She expressed her opinion that her benefactor was a very soft gentleman—at least so his wife told him. What she must have said of us, who gave a shilling each! But perhaps the wife was jealous.

Washington

May 8. 1871

My dear C,

The first and only
use I make of this pen
after signing the Treaty
with it is to send you
a notification of the
fact.

Yours devoted

Stephen H. Hutton

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We have decidedly met with more fun in the last three days than in the rest of our tour. Some of the rules which the Friendly Societies at Cork "condescended" to were delicious. Think of this: "If any member is in the habit of striking and maltreating his wife (a most disgraceful and inexcusable practice, and one likely to lead to the worst consequences as regards the wife's health), he shall forfeit any benefit as respects the said wife." In order to preserve peace and harmony, any member refusing to be silent when ordered, or any member challenging another to fight, is to be fined; and any member coming in with his face and hands dirty, or with a beard of extraordinary length, is to be excluded. "If any member come in intoxicated, yet so as to be able to conduct himself in conformity with these rules, he shall be allowed to sit; but if otherwise, he shall be marked 'troublesome,' and if any member be three times called 'troublesome' by the president and marked so by the secretary, he shall be"—I forget whether it is fined or excluded.

At Liverpool "we are taking evidence showing the rascality of a lot of scamps, but I have great doubts whether it will lead to much good." The journeyings ended safely, but a voyage from Pynes to town at the end of the year was marked by a railway accident, elsewhere described.

The results, the practical results of travelling much, and suffering many things of many witnesses, were expressed in the Friendly Societies Bill, which (to anticipate) Sir Stafford brought in, and withdrew in 1874, and which passed in 1875. A confidential minute of December 20, 1874, sets forth his ideas, his aims, means, and the possible objections to them:

The principal object of the bill may be said to be the maintenance and improvement of the Friendly Society system; that is to say, of a system which allows and encourages persons to form themselves into societies to provide themselves with pay in sickness, at death, or at other periods; which recognises such societies on their registering their rules with a Government officer, and gives them certain advantages, either in the courts of law or otherwise, which without some special legislation they would not possess.

One school said, the State had better leave the whole

affair alone; the other school, that the State should make its interference more effectual.

His own bill went with neither school:—

It aims in the main at these two objects:

1. The giving of information, which may be of use to the founders and managers of societies, and may assist them in framing proper rules and tables; and,

2. The requiring the managers of societies to give such information to the public as may enable intelligent persons to judge for themselves (and for those in whom they may feel an interest) what the real position of any particular society is, and whether it offers an eligible means of investment or not.

In order to accomplish the first object, the bill provides for the preparation of good model tables of contributions and benefits, to be issued by the Government for the use of such societies as choose to adopt them. It also proposes to give additional facilities for the audit of accounts and for the valuation of societies, by a proper attention to which managers may ascertain from time to time how their society stands, and whether any measures for strengthening it are required.

In order to accomplish the second object, the bill provides for the registration of societies, not only at headquarters in London, but in the various counties in which they carry on their business, and for the registration, not only of their names, places of business, and rules, but also of the periodical valuations of their assets and liabilities, which are henceforth to be made compulsory, and which are to be made, or at all events abstracted, on a uniform principle. It is hoped that these may by-and-by be made so simple that any ordinary village schoolmaster or other fairly educated person will be able to understand them, and give useful advice to persons in humbler positions who may think of joining any particular society.

Subject to these two conditions—the giving of sound advice, and the requiring of correct information for general use—it is the general intention of the bill to leave the managers of societies as free as possible to follow any course they please with regard to their constitution and management. There are, however, certain classes of societies for which some particular regulations appear to be needed. The principal of these are the great Burial Societies.

These Burial Societies, composed, as they are, of the poorest and most ignorant part of the population, and to a large extent of mere infants, have for the most part a central managing body

in some great town, which directs their operations all over the kingdom. The danger here lies, not so much in their adopting unsound tables of contributions and benefits, as in their spending too much on the management, and in their oppressing the distant or helpless members. The bill, therefore, contains some provisions for meeting the principal evils connected with this class of societies. These provisions will be found in the 30th clause of the amended bill of last session. They are, to a great extent, founded on those contained in a bill introduced by Lord Lichfield in 1868, which was defeated mainly by the opposition of the great Burial Societies.

The bill also contains some restrictions upon the insurance of infant lives. This is a subject which is sure to evoke much popular interest on both sides of the question. On the side of the Burial Societies it will be urged that these restrictions will prevent parents from fulfilling their natural desire to make provision for the interment of their children. On the other side, it will be contended that they are necessary to prevent much culpable neglect, if not actual infanticide. It will be seen that this part of the bill has been much modified. In the first draft it was proposed absolutely to prohibit the insurance of children under three years of age. In the revised draft (sec. 27) the provisions are, that no child under three years of age shall be insured in more than one society, nor for a larger sum than 30s.; that none but the parent or his personal representative shall receive the payment; and that greater strictness shall be observed in the matter of certificates. These latter regulations apply to children under ten years of age. They are to be enforced by making the breach of them "offences" under the Act, and as such they will subject the offenders to penalties of from £1 to £5.

These, then, being the leading objects of the bill, we have next to consider the machinery by which it is proposed to attain them. This is partly old and partly new. In the main, however, it may be described as machinery constructed on the old lines, but strengthened and improved in some material points.

In the first place, the bill proposes to consolidate and re-enact the bulk of the present Friendly Societies law; to continue a system of registration, though one which will differ in some particulars from that now in force; and to continue to registered societies the legal advantages which they now possess.¹ It pro-

¹ "These advantages are thus described in the Report of the Royal Commissioners:—

"They can hold property in the names of trustees:

"Can sue and be sued in representative names:

poses to make it easier for societies to register, and to place stricter limits on the arbitrary power of the registrar to refuse his certificate, which is now a cause of complaint.

With these objects in view, it proposes to consolidate the registries of the three kingdoms, which are now very inconveniently kept distinct, so that a society intending to carry on business in more than one kingdom may register for all alike at the central office. It proposes also to allow societies which carry on their operations within a single county, to register each with the clerk of the peace of its own county. It proposes to remove the restrictions which, according to the construction placed on the law by successive registrars, prevent the registration of the "dividing" or "sharing-out" clubs which abound in the rural parts of the country, and in some of the country towns, and in fact to admit to the privileges of the law almost any type of society. It proposes to give to the promoters of societies a right of appeal to a court of law, in case the registrar refuses them registration.

But, in addition to these advantages, the bill proposes to call upon the registrar's office (which is to be strengthened for the purpose), to render other services to the societies. Tables of contributions and benefits, and model forms of accounts, balance-sheets, and valuations are to be prepared there, and published for the use of societies, though their use is to be entirely optional on the part of the managers. These tables will afford a standard with which to compare the tables in use by different societies. The Institute of Actuaries are at the present moment kindly giving their attention to the number and classes of tables which should be prepared; and I hope to be in possession of their views before the meeting of Parliament.

It was proposed to render these periodical valuations compulsory upon all registered societies, and to record the results, and place them where they could be studied by hesitating investors.

He anticipated that many of the real objections would

"Can proceed against their officers in case of any fraud or misconduct :

"Can recover property from their estates in certain cases :

"May make provision for the settlement of disputes among their members by arbitration :

"Can invest their funds with the Commissioners for the Reduction of National Debt :

"Are exempt, within certain limits, from stamp duties :

"And can be dissolved on cheap and easy terms when occasion arises."

be "kept in the background." Many astute persons had a personal and pecuniary interest in "clipping the wings of the bill." Many would be jealous of all Government interference. Yet the moderation of the bill, on the other hand, would "render many ardent reformers indifferent to it. Its opponents would be bitter, its supporters lukewarm."

Indeed the 'Times' described the bill as modest, if not timid. "The measure was a compromise, and its provisions were mainly permissive." For, as it happened, the societies were *not* subjected to compulsory supervision. It had always been Sir Stafford's principle "to interfere as little as possible with the voluntary action of those who are managing Friendly Societies." "It is better that the societies should not be governed as well as they might be, than that Parliament should do anything in the way of governing them beyond what was absolutely necessary." What he thought they most wanted was "proper facilities for action, and, above all, they want proper information," which his bill gave them. The 'Times' justly remarked that "a storm of unpopularity" would have been the result of securing the members of Friendly Societies too effectually against their managers. *Nolenti non fit beneficium!*

The Liberal historian of the period,¹ with his love of intrepid enterprise, calls the bill "the mild and timid result of the long inquiry which the previous Government had carried on." At least one of the "inquirers" produced the bill. It was permissive, but the permission it gives has been acted on—which these sorts of permissions rarely are. Sir Stafford, indeed, was "told continually that the measure was inadequate and delusive." He believed it was "nothing of the sort. In those respects in which it was said to fall short, it was not from any weakness or timidity that it so fell short, but from a deliberate view that the only and true way of bringing about a development of the virtue of providence amongst the people was to make them work it out for themselves, and that our great desire ought to be to give fair play, and

¹ Mr Clayden, in 'England under Lord Beaconsfield.'

full play, to those institutions which have sprung from the people themselves; but not on that account do we mean to shirk our own duty in this matter."¹

The Friendly Societies were true to their name when Lord Iddesleigh died. The Manchester Unity of Oddfellows sent a letter of condolence to Lady Iddesleigh, "expressing the sad and irreparable loss the Friendly Societies had suffered by the Earl's death." The London members of the Ancient Order of Foresters did the same. And the Manchester Grand Master spoke for upwards of 600,000 members, when he said "that England has lost one of the greatest supporters of voluntary thrift, as exemplified in the working of Friendly Societies and of kindred institutions."²

The years 1872-73—years of comparative peace and rest at home and abroad—did not contain any events of much biographical note or interest. There were the usual flittings from Pynes to London and the House of Commons, and in 1872 Sir Stafford went on a yachting cruise with Lord Carnarvon among the Scilly Islands. A riding tour in Devonshire occupied in the same way the leisure of early autumn in 1873. The letters of this time are of merely domestic interest, and the work done was mainly on the Friendly Society Commission and at the Hudson Bay Company. We may pass over the times which, being happy, had no history of mark, and may reach the days of Mr Disraeli's Conservative success at the poll, and the appointment of Sir Stafford to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. With the single exception of Mr Gladstone, there was no living statesman so fit for the tenure of that arduous and rather thankless office—the stewardship of English financial affairs.

¹ Speech at Manchester, December 8, 1875.

² Mr Stoddrell's letter in the 'Times,' January 20, 1887.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

THE years of Sir Stafford's stewardship of English finance are full of "lessons." No lesson among them is more prominent than that of party criticism and its unkindness.¹ The charges brought against his administration of finance remind one of the stripes with which the Arcadians visited the statue of Pan, when he brought them no luck. They whipped Pan with nettles, for matters of which he was entirely guiltless. In the same way, Liberal critics denounced Sir Stafford for having "frittered away"—that was the consecrated expression—"a magnificent surplus," and for having, in a spirit of Conservative malignity, raised the expenditure, and lowered the income of England.

In opposition to this view, one may quote, from a letter (April 1875) to Mr Welby (now Sir Reginald Welby), Sir Stafford's principles of financial policy—the ideas to which he strove to be true. They are thus expressed:—

1. Prudent but not deliberately *under* estimates.
2. The habitual retention of a substantial surplus.
3. The retention of the income-tax at a low fixed rate, not to be disturbed for anything short of a national emergency.
4. The appropriation of a fixed annual sum to the charge for debt.
5. The avoidance of new taxes; and,
6. As a corollary I must add, toleration of old ones.

Parliament and the country ought really to make up their minds to deal frankly and courageously with these matters, to eschew sensationalism, and to act on steady principles.

The truth was, of course, that Sir Stafford's Chancellor-

¹ In a letter to a friend (May 3, 1876), I find Sir Stafford saying: "Case-hardened as I am myself, and accustomed to the injustices and the discouragements which a public man has to undergo, I can recall many occasions on which I have felt, as keenly perhaps as you now feel, the bitterness of official life. It has been hard to learn the lesson, *virtute mea me involvo*." Perhaps the good-humour and self-restraint of public men is the most engaging feature in public life.

ship of the Exchequer fell in the lean years that followed the fat years, and he was no more responsible for their emaciation than was Pharaoh's chief butler or baker for the condition of the shadowy kine. When Mr Gladstone appealed to the country in 1874, our prosperity had been "advancing by leaps and bounds," and performing athletic feats which it has ever since declined to repeat. A Liberal Administration was not the cause of the good times, though, when the Conservatives came in, working men were heard to observe, "Now for bad times." The arrival of bad times was an affair of coincidence, not of causation; just as the lack of rain in South Africa was *not* due to the church-bell, the beard, nor the bag of salt of Dr Moffat the missionary, though these theories were broached by intelligent Basuto economists. What makes good times? what makes hard times? are questions which philosophers are unable to answer; but popular Liberal speakers and writers argued as if Mr Gladstone were a financial *Mascotte*, as if winged fortune were unwinged for his sake, and abode with him. On the other hand, the years after his return in 1880 have been years lean and plagued, yet rural patriarchs have already been known to observe, "When old Beaconsfield was gaffer, there were none of them bad times." However, Sir Stafford came into office with a noble surplus bequeathed by Mr Gladstone, a surplus reckoned at more than five millions. Ever since, ever since 1877, his opponents have been asking, *Ubi est ille surplus?* and their answer, as in the famous case of *ille sicarius*, has been *Non est inventus*. "Where is our magnificent surplus?" they have cried, as if a surplus were usually put away in an old stocking; and Sir Stafford kept telling them where it was, and what he had done with it, but they marked him not.

"Don't talk to me," says your lecturer, "of Conservative finance. The Tories came into office with a surplus of six millions, bequeathed by Mr Gladstone, and they not only spent it all in their six years of office, but left a deficiency of six millions in its place."¹

¹ "Figures, Facts, and Fallacies." In 'National Review,' July 1883.

Sir Stafford remarks that "it is too much to expect that any one, who is not obliged to do it, should hunt up old Budget speeches." The task is irksome indeed, especially to "any poor child of Nature," as Mr Matthew Arnold described himself; but a little research in old Budget speeches will show where the magnificent surplus went, and how little the Chancellor of the Exchequer was responsible for the "melancholy minus quantity."

Mr Gladstone not only left a surplus in 1874: he had also proposed to get rid of the income-tax, if but the electors would restore him to power. Mr Chamberlain, according to Mr Clayden,¹ was not far from the mark when he described Mr Gladstone's address, containing these proposals, as "the meanest public document which has ever, in like circumstances, proceeded from a statesman of the first rank." Without adopting this rather rude estimate of Mr Gladstone's purposes, one may admit that it is not easy to see how he meant to do all that he intended to do. Sir Stafford, in his first Budget speech, wished to

"Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,"

and make him reveal his mystery. But the secret will never be revealed, at least in practice. In his letters to Mr Disraeli we find Sir Stafford much perplexed by his bequest. How was he to employ his surplus of over five millions? Deputations came all day suggesting this or that method of giving themselves a slice. Even before the elections, even before he knew that the cutting of the cake would fall to himself, he wrote:—

Take Gladstone's surplus, however, at five millions, and see what he has to do with it. He has, first, to relieve rateable property from a substantial amount of taxation; secondly, to take off the income-tax; and thirdly, I suppose, to remit the remainder of the sugar duties. The three operations together can hardly cost him less than seven millions, probably more; so there must be at least two millions to be provided by fresh taxa-

¹ England under Lord Beaconsfield, p. 17.

tion. How is this to be got? Not, I presume, by another match-tax. It must be by some kind of tax on realised property, and perhaps by licences on trades. You will remember what he said on this subject in 1853, when he pointed to the possibility of replacing the income-tax by a conjunction of three measures: one a tax upon land, houses, and visible property, of perhaps sixpence in the pound; another, a system of licences on trade, made universal, and averaging something like seven pounds; and the third, a change in the system of legacy duties. He then said that such a system would be, on the whole, more unequal and annoying than the income-tax, and that it would raise the difficult question of the taxation of the public funds in the most inconvenient form. I cannot help suspecting that if he were now to give us the details of his plan on the eve, instead of on the morrow, of a general election, he would find that a good many constituencies would say with poor Lord Derby, "We prefer the gout." What a funny view it is, after all, that Gladstone takes of the income-tax! It is, according to him, properly a temporary tax—a war-tax, admitted, however, into our financial system in time of peace for certain purposes of commercial legislation—requiring a temporary impost for their attainment, just as a war does. The purposes having been attained, one would expect him to say that the tax might be taken off, as it would have been at the end of a war. But no! "It is *manifest* that we ought not to aid the rates and remove the income-tax without giving to the general consumer, and giving him simultaneously, some marked relief in the class of articles of popular consumption." In other words, you find that the duties on articles of consumption are exceedingly high, and you believe that by reducing them largely, you can benefit the consumer without ultimately injuring the revenue, and if to cover the operation you lay a temporary tax upon property or income while the revenue is recovering itself, and if it ultimately does recover itself so that the temporary tax is no longer needed, still "it is *manifest*" that you must not take off the temporary tax without still further reducing or quite abolishing the duty on the article of consumption. What logic! Logical or not, I am afraid that it is true that the view is one which will so commend itself to the masses as to make it impossible to extinguish the income-tax without at the same time dealing with some tax on articles of consumption. The truth is, that the income-tax has lost its temporary character, and has become a fixed element in our financial system, which now includes a much larger proportion of direct taxation than it did in 1842. So, then, whenever we reduce the income-tax, we seem to be disturbing the balance

between direct and indirect taxation, and disturbing it in favour of the wealthier classes, unless we reduce indirect taxes at the same time. To this, perhaps, we might resign ourselves; but in the present case there seems an additional absurdity, because it is not proposed simply to abolish the income-tax, but to substitute for a portion of it some other impost on property, while at the same time it is acknowledged that the kinds of visible property which now bear local taxation ought to be relieved of a portion of their burden. In short, direct taxation is to be readjusted in order to cure its inequalities, and to render it fairer. This is a difficult task in itself, and why we should go out of our way to make it more difficult by imposing on ourselves the voluntary obligation to reduce some taxes on consumption at the same time, I cannot (except with reference to electioneering necessities) conceive. Upon the whole, I think we have a strong case for warning the country not to be misled or dazzled by the vague promises of the address, and to distrust the great financial policy till they see what it is.

In this letter, by the way (January 25, 1874), Sir Stafford alludes to a paragraph in Mr Gladstone's address, "which appears darkly to encourage the Home Rulers."

To return to his troubles with the surplus. "Could we possibly expect to be allowed to retain such a surplus as that?" he asks, pathetically. "Supposing that you reduced the income-tax by one-half, and gave the £550,000 to local taxation, you would still have £1,000,000 surplus. Would not even this be too large, and should we not have an ugly rush at it?" Should they sweep away some of the Excise licences? Should they abandon the sugar duty?¹ The alternatives appeared to be abolishing the income-tax, or deciding against, or postponing, the abolition of the income-tax, reducing it to twopence, giving large grants in aid of local taxation, and repealing the sugar tax. But divers other schemes were selected and rejected. Sir Stafford maintained that "for any of these measures suggested, it is important that we should shake off that

¹ Sir Stafford was by no means of opinion that democratic taxation, relieving the less wealthy classes, would lead to a readiness to make war. "If there were to be a real war ferment at any time, I should be sorry to trust to such a sedative as the threat of doubling the sugar duties would be."

absurd maxim as to the simultaneous decrease of direct and indirect taxation." But he believed that, when *adding* taxation, "you ought not to place it upon the income-tax only; but you ought to accompany it with some call upon indirect taxation."¹ Through this period of incubating his first Budget, he "felt like a chess-player studying an important move, and seeing new combinations at every turn."

It is needless to fatigue the reader with all the combinations. The result was made public in the Budget speech of April 16, 1874. Sir Stafford congratulated the late Government very heartily on their economical and satisfactory management of the war in Ashantee. He defended Mr Gladstone against the charge, brought, of course, by the Tories, of having been too sanguine in his Estimates. "Instead of being too sanguine, he has been within the mark." The receipts from Customs and Excise had exceeded expectation. The public had been drinking enormously, for these were "good times." But he very strongly disliked this particular symptom of prosperity. If temperance and abstinence were only to increase, though the revenue from spirits would fall, "I venture to say that the amount of wealth such a change would bring to the nation would utterly throw into the shade the amount of revenue that is now derived from the spirit duty." Unhappily any fall in the tide of gin and whisky seems to be due to poverty rather than happier dispositions. Pleasant as it was to see the "consuming power" of the public increased, he had already been obliged to listen to prophecies of evil. The coming of the lean kine had already been predicted—the slackening of employment, the fall in consumption, had been foreseen. Expenditure must still be kept down. Still, there was the surplus of more than five millions. Some might say that a country which had a debt could never really have a surplus. He could not agree with them, but the reduction of the debt was always one of his main ideas. He proposed for this year to reduce it by terminable annuities with the £450,000 of interest on advances at his disposal, using for this purpose the balance of Post-office Savings Banks' money. As to

¹ Budget speech, April 3, 1879.

the whole surplus, apart from the £450,000 of interest, he first touched on local taxation without approaching the whole subject, as the Government was new in office. But, having a surplus, he determined to relieve local taxation. Lunatics were to receive a contribution from the Consolidated Fund—namely, four shillings a-week a-head to the Unions for each lunatic in their asylums. Lunatics in Ireland had already been selected by Mr Gladstone for the receipt of benevolence out of the funds of the Irish Church, so Mr Gladstone might be expected to approve of this expenditure. To the police he assigned £600,000. Then, advancing to the income-tax, he admitted, like one of Shakespeare's clowns talking of his mistress, that "she hath more faults than hairs," but also "more wealth than faults." So he took one penny off the income-tax. More than half the surplus was now "frittered away," exclusive of what went to the reduction of the debt; and he next proposed to abolish the sugar duties. As a source of revenue they "do more harm than good upon the whole." As to the competition in sugar refining with France and other Powers, he could not rely on treaties, but "upon the sense of its own interest which a foreign nation has in not wasting its money upon subsidies to its refiners." The sugar duties went for £2,000,000, and the repeal of the tax on horses cost an additional £480,000. And that was how he frittered away his surplus.

A Liberal critic remarks that this was "the Liberal Budget watered down to the standard of Conservative finance," and adds that Mr Gladstone's successor could only "muddle it away,"—the surplus, that is. He says, too, that Mr Gladstone "had proposed to abolish the income-tax as well as the sugar duties." But this very critic we have quoted as agreeing (more or less) with Mr Chamberlain and with the Opposition, that Mr Gladstone's proposal was a "huge bribe," his address "the meanest public document which has ever, in like circumstances, proceeded from a statesman of the first rank."¹

He had agreed to the extent of saying that Mr Chamberlain's remarks were "a shrewd and on the whole a correct

¹ Clayden's *England under Lord Beaconsfield*, pp. 17, 68, 69.

summary of the Address, but not entirely fair to Mr Gladstone." The unfairness appears to have lain in supposing that the promises of Mr Gladstone were made for mere electioneering purposes. That may answer the moral charges of Mr Gladstone's critics, but it leaves the practical question untouched. *Could* Mr Gladstone have completed "the story of Cambuscan bold"? And if not, what was the harm in Sir Stafford's less romantic performance? Was the "opportunity" really there, the opportunity which was "muddled away"? Even supposing that a heaven-born Minister could have escaped the Eastern troubles and the Zulu affair, could he have retained Fortune as his minion. "Fortune is Pistol's foe," and the bad times, already looming, would have come, whoever was at the helm, and the income-tax could not have been slain except to rise again.

As to the frittering away of the magnificent surplus, Sir Stafford spoke at Liverpool (January 25, 1877). He said the magnificent surplus was "got up to a certain extent by putting off a great many claims and charges which would ultimately have had to be met." It was as if a man should decline to spend money on his estate in repairs, leaving them as Sir Pitt Crawley left his lodge-keeper's roof, windows, and walls. The navy had been treated by the late Government as Sir Pitt treated Mrs Lock's cottage. "They had not only put off a great many things which it was absolutely necessary to do—the repairing of ships, for instance, and many other matters of that kind; . . . but they had entered into large schemes and made large promises with reference to the army and educational reform, and other things which necessarily entailed further expense upon their successors; and therefore, when we are asked, What have you done with the enormous surplus of five millions? I say that you must consider that a very considerable (*sic*) proportion of it was necessary for the purpose of meeting the engagements that you had undertaken for us."

But had the surplus been frittered away after all? He answered, again and again, "You cannot eat your cake and have it." Each person in Liverpool, where he

spoke, had actually received 1s. 3d. in remission of sugar tax. But a vain people easily forgets a present of fifteenpence a-head. Owners of horses had been freed from an "annoying" tax. Seventy-eight thousand pounds, in Liverpool alone, had gone to lunatics and the police. Meanwhile the Budget had, at least, not curried favour with the friends of the Government.

The farmers, of course, were disgusted that no attempt was made to reduce or repeal the malt-tax. But Mr Gladstone himself "expressed his general approval of a scheme the main outlines of which were a faint reproduction of his own."

So much for Sir Stafford's first Budget.

Continuing the history of his finance, we find him in January of the following year saying to Mr Disraeli that "the chance of getting through without any addition to taxation appears very remote, though not *quite* visionary." A good deal of money was wanted for the fleet, which Mr Ward Hunt had found in a "phantom" estate—like youth that grows "spectre-thin, and dies." Excise was less profitable than common, because of the large and rich potato-harvest in Germany. German potato-spirit had "taken the place of British spirit, and paid us through the Customs instead of through Excise. This was a mere shifting of source of money; but there was that horrid navy excess of £160,000 in the background." The following lines from a letter (March 31, 1875) to Mr Disraeli, put in simple colloquial words the burden of his financial policy, permanence of arrangements, reduction of debt:—

What I am now anxious for is the acceptance by the Cabinet of my proposal to grant the income-tax (at 2d.) for three years. There is no chance of our getting rid of it sooner, even if we wished to do so. But I don't wish to do so. I am anxious to keep the tax—keep it as it is, keep it low, and keep it unaltered and unalterable except in the case of a real emergency.

This will give a character and consistency to our financial policy. We ought to show that we know what we are about. If we simply say, as we may be tempted to say, that we will let everything alone, we shall be taunted with having simply taken up Gladstone's surplus; spent it as he would have suggested,

but without the finer strokes of his genius; been very lucky in just scraping through our first year, and being now content to drift. Then we shall be exposed to attacks of all kinds—some from those who will try to pledge us to get rid of the tax, others who will want us to alter it—and we may find ourselves driven into a corner, if we have not some fixed policy of our own.

There is another matter on which I also wish to lay down a policy—the mode of dealing with the debt. I believe we can introduce more stability into this part of our system also, and lay down principles which will greatly reduce fluctuations in taxation. But I will not go into this matter now.

While occupied with his Budget, he had to consider and reject the proposal of a Government guarantee to a Euphrates Valley Railway, though Government “would gladly see the line constructed.” His Budget speech (April 15, 1875) showed a surplus of £496,873 for the financial year just ended, which he thought would be “a disappointment—of course an agreeable disappointment”—to his Liberal critics. Had he not removed a penny from income-tax, his position would of course have been very much more pleasant. But he was the reverse of Horace’s miser, with his

“At mihi plaudo
Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arca.”

“I, on the other hand, console myself, whatever may be the hisses of a few instructors of public opinion, with the reflection that the money is not in my cash-box, but in the pockets of the people.” He explained the spirituous consequences of Germany’s great potato-harvest, which, after all, was mainly used here “for purposes of methylation” rather than of conviviality. Tea had produced £320,000 more than the year before; satisfactory, “as showing that tea, to some extent perhaps, is taking the place of spirits,” and that the remission of the sugar duties had benefited English tea-drinkers. There was a diminution in stamps; the telegraph service was not yet remunerative. He again justly applauded his predecessors for their economical conduct of the Ashantee war. But he could not see any signs of a revival in trade, for the ill

years were fairly begun—naturally, too, as the Liberals were out. Thus he could not treat the revenue as a thing necessarily bound to keep on increasing. As to the income-tax, he remarked: "We have been obliged to consider it; and whether it would be desirable to do that which it is quite possible to do—to make arrangements and readjustments by which we may dispense with it, or materially modify it." He admitted the objections to it, and to "the inequality of its incidence." These inequalities he considered inherent in the nature of the tax; inherent, too, is "its inquisitorial character." All these objections were gravest when the tax is high. He wished it to be "low, uniform, and, as far as possible, steady." He proposed to renew it at twopence in the pound. The most important part of this speech dealt with a scheme for the reduction of debt. Let us briefly state the matter in the words of the Liberal historian:—

Sir Stafford's great scheme, and that which distinguished the Budget of the year, was that for beginning the paying off of the National Debt. The interest on the debt for the year was reckoned at £27,215,000. Sir Stafford proposed to fix it in future at £28,000,000, and use the surplus in extinguishing the principal of the debt. This was to be done by three steps: £27,400,000 was to be charged for the current year; for the year 1876-77, it was to be £27,700,000; and for all succeeding years, £28,000,000. The scheme was severely criticised, but it was popular and passed. *It is clearly a prudent step, but it reduced the surplus even of the current year by £185,000.*¹

Thus do measures which are prudent and popular "fritter away the surplus," and such was criticism, which regarded the surplus as a sacred thing, not to be reduced even by prudence.

In his remarks on this arrangement, Sir Stafford said that he was "no enthusiast" on the National Debt, "but I think we ought to make continuous and steady efforts for its reduction, and that our efforts ought not to be violent and spasmodic." Ever since the Finance Committee of 1828, it had been admitted as an axiom that "we can only redeem debt by the surplus of revenue over ex-

¹ England under Lord Beaconsfield, pp. 144, 145.

penditure." The application of "casual surpluses" was insufficient. He stated the objections to terminable annuities. They might not be taken up, or not satisfactorily. You could invest savings banks' money in them, and so cancel your stock. But then any one might say that you were investing the public's savings "in what would be in the market an unprofitable security." Again, terminable annuities "produce a kind of spasmodic action." When they fell in, the relief might be reckoned "a wind-fall," and treated as "windfalls" are usually treated. *Autant en emporte le vent.* He then proposed his own plan, which has already been given in a summary by a Liberal critic. If that plan were allowed to work by grace of "ordinary circumstances and the ordinary growth of the revenue," by 1885 "you will have cancelled £21,000,000, and in thirty years from this time you will have cancelled £213,000,000." He foresaw and admitted the force of the criticism, "You will never be able to bind future Parliaments, and the very first time that a Chancellor of the Exchequer wants to raise an additional revenue without increasing taxation, he will put an end to your Sinking Fund." *Et puis après?*

"Under circumstances different from the present *I say that would be a very reasonable thing for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to do.* . . . But one thing is quite clear, that if we do not put it on, it will certainly come to nothing; and we shall be in the position of the gentleman who would not wind up his watch, because if he did not wind it up, it would never stop." He himself "thought the experiment worth making." He was *not* "binding future Parliaments." Nobody who wished to destroy his Sinking Fund (he did not use this illustration) would have to make his proposal, as in old Athens concerning the gold on the statue of Athene, with a rope round his neck.

In 1881, speaking at Edinburgh, he again described the scope and meaning of his measure:—

Some years ago the practice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, in estimating for the expenditure of the coming year, to make provision, of course, for the payment of the interest of the

National Debt for the coming twelvemonth ; and as the National Debt was gradually diminished by the action of terminable annuities which had been created by Mr Gladstone and other Ministers, the amount that was so required for the payment of the annual interest from time to time somewhat diminished. The proposal which I made was, that we should fix a certain sum—somewhat higher than the amount that we were then paying for the interest of the discharge of the debt, and that that amount should be applied every year to the payment of the interest in the first place, and with regard to the remainder, for the reduction of the principal. The object which I had in view was this, to introduce something like steadiness into our finance ; and that we should not from time to time, because there happened to be a little reduction here in our charges, or a little reduction there, apply a smaller sum than we were doing to the reduction of the debt ; and I therefore called upon Parliament, and the House of Commons was good enough to agree, to raise the amount that we were paying at that time—something like $27\frac{1}{4}$ millions—to a fixed amount of £28,000,000 a-year, which £28,000,000 was to continue permanently, and so to cover not only the interest but the reduction of the debt. You will easily understand the operation of such a proposal as I made in the event of additions not being made to the debt—that is to say, if the £28,000,000 were enough in one year to pay the whole interest of the debt, and to pay off besides half a million or a million of the capital, the amount of the interest to be paid in the next year would be less by the amount of the interest on that half million or million ; and as this process was continued, the amount of charge for interest would every year become smaller, while the amount applicable to the redemption of capital would every year become larger. When once these measures had been put into an Act of Parliament, the reduction of the debt would become a serious measure.

Such an Act of Parliament was his desire.

Mr Gladstone attacked the measure (May 7).

As to the scheme for reducing the National Debt, Mr Gladstone admitted that it had “the approbation of the most sagacious of all things inanimate—namely, the three per cents.” But, on the whole, he (like Sir Stafford’s grandmother in an early page of this work) distrusted the splendours of his friend’s imagination. It had “taken a flight into the empyrean,” and ranged down to 1905, be-

holding a surplus of £500,000 for every year in that vista of time. Even this year the surplus (if I may quote Dr Johnson's remark about the ghost) was "something of a shadowy being." As to appropriations to reduce the National Debt, "annual appropriations arbitrarily fixed by those who do not intend to find the money for them, but who think it laudable and creditable to lay it down that future Parliaments shall find that money, they have been tried and tested by experience"—Mr Gladstone gave instances—"and have failed again and again." Mr Gladstone had remarked that there were three ways of reducing the debt,—the first, to maintain a surplus of revenue over expenditure; the second, a system of terminable annuities; and the third, by fixed appropriations. In his reply, after defending the existence of a surplus, Sir Stafford maintained that there was really but one way. The maintenance of revenue over expenditure could not be put in contradistinction to any other plan. But one legitimate way there was, the maintenance of revenue over expenditure. No puzzle with terminable annuities or anything else was of any avail, nor did Sir Stafford suppose that Mr Gladstone meant anything of the sort. As for binding the future, Mr Gladstone himself had left his successors "to provide for the terminable annuities which, at his suggestion, we have been paying for the express purpose of extinguishing debt, and it is just as fictitious and as unreal as any other system."¹ Mr Gladstone, "the most incredulous man I ever met," "keeps on shaking his head whenever I refer to him." Sir Stafford maintained that he had explained his scheme in ten minutes, while Mr Gladstone, in 1865, occupied half an hour, "gave every one a headache," and indeed divided the person of the Chancellor of the Exchequer into two—the Chancellor as finance Minister, and the Chancellor as banker. The difference between the two systems was the difference (illustrated in a novel of Scott's) of gambling away the half-crown at neevie-nick-nack instead of

¹ By way of a financial curiosity, one may remark that the idea of buying objects of art with surpluses, instead of diminishing the National Debt, had been suggested from South Kensington!

at pitch-and-toss. The Liberals had reduced debt with one hand while raising it with the other. Their right hand paid off debt by terminable annuities, their left borrowed for fortifications, and permitted the savings banks' deficiency, which he proposed to extinguish, to go on increasing. As to the terminable annuities, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, dividing the person, as one may say, making terms as banker with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as finance Minister, had been both buyer and seller of these annuities, and had fixed the price as he thought fit.

"If you attempt to rest any scheme for the reduction of debt on terminable annuities, . . . you will either make a bargain too favourable, and add to the debt, or you will make a bargain too unfavourable, and so rob those for whom you are trustees—the savings banks' depositors." He would retain terminable annuities to a certain extent by provisions in the bill; "but to say that it is the only really sound and sensible principle to act upon, and that the other which I propose is unsound and visionary, seems to me to be nothing but gross and sheer prejudice." He maintained, after alluding to Mr Gladstone's critical eye as worthy of "the Epidaurian serpent," that his plan was sound and stable, because it established a consistent policy of repaying debt, and yet could be set aside whenever the necessities of the country required that it should be put an end to.

Liberal critics have often alleged that Sir Stafford "could never stand up to Mr Gladstone," but in this little bout he does not seem to have been worsted by his old friend.

There was a return match on June 8. Mr Gladstone again objected to the real absence of a surplus. Sir Stafford remarked that, when in Opposition, it had been his business also to prove that there was no surplus, and "he knew, therefore, how far it was usual to go in that way," a queer commentary on this queer game of party government. The whole matter, he said, "had been thoroughly threshed out," and we may agree with Odysseus where he says, "'tis hateful to me to tell again a tale once clearly told."

In the long-run the Sinking Fund was carried by 189 votes against 122.

The subject of the savings banks' deficiency has already been alluded to. Sir Stafford, in the course of the session of 1875, introduced a bill dealing with the question, which, as he remarked (May 27), was "rather a complicated one." The bill was encountered with great hostility by the (for once) united Opposition. Sir Stafford explained that he did not, as Mr Fawcett seemed to think, propose to put the money of depositors in savings banks and friendly societies on security less stable than in the past. The depositors had the security of the Consolidated Fund. Tricks were not being played with the depositors' money. "This, at all events, is out of the question and impossible." I cannot give here the history of savings banks, the old and the new. To be brief, there was an increasing deficiency, which every one wished to stop in some way or another. There were proposals to lower the rate of interest, but Sir Stafford could not advocate this course. "You would make the present depositors in the savings banks pay for a deficiency which they had nothing to do with incurring"—that is, capitalists in the new banks would pay for a deficiency in the old banks. The dealings of former Chancellors, too, had contributed to the deficiency. The Post-office Savings Banks had made profits over and above the stipulated interest. These profits belonged to the State, and might be used to stop the leak in the old savings banks. Local securities were to be invested in. The depositors ran no risk. Local interests would be served. Mr Gladstone was "unable to travel with him a single step along the road on which he marches." He differed from his historical statement. The deficits were due "solely and simply to the fact that we have been banking on principles which no banker would have adopted." As a banker, to Mr Gladstone's thinking, Sir Stafford had no reserve. He was starting two kinds of banking, one not to pay, the other to pay, and to pay for the other too. Business, becoming a matter of sham banking and pseudo-benevolence, had made a sham vested interest. Sir Stafford was maintaining absurd and vexa-

tious restrictions on the amount of deposits, which Mr Gladstone was almost ashamed to say that he had been compelled to introduce with the Post-office Savings Banks, so as to conciliate the old savings banks. In a reforming measure this "gross absurdity" was perpetuated. Mr Gladstone amusingly "took the case of an insane banker" to illustrate his criticisms. The Imperial Government could not wisely become the creditor of small local authorities. Sir Stafford in his reply returned to the deficiency. That was the question—How were you to stop it? His plan was "just to all parties." In a later debate, when Sir Stafford contended that the savings banks were secured against "runs" by various methods and resources, Mr Gladstone again complained of his ardent "imagination." Mr Disraeli repeated Sir Stafford's remarks on the practical problem, the deficiency, and how it was to be met. "How will you arrest the course of compound interest, which has already produced such terrible effects? The right hon. member for Greenwich threw not the slightest light upon that point. We must deal with the circumstances." They must carry their proposal, or reduce the interest on the deposits in the old savings banks.

The whole discussion is one on which only the opinion of specialists is valuable. Mr Gladstone appears to have been ideally right; perhaps his opponents were not practically wrong. Sir Stafford's position was that, "in dealing with the deficiency question, we ought to take care in no way to prejudice the question of reform." His attempt was a mere filling up of a leak, not a reconstruction of a vessel. The bill was ultimately withdrawn.

Apart from finance, Sir Stafford played a difficult and important part in Parliament at this time, and was becoming marked out as Mr Disraeli's successor in the leadership of the House of Commons. The question of the risks of seamen and of overloading vessels was before the House, and excited much emotion in England. Then came (July 22) the celebrated appearance of Mr Plimsoll in the House of Commons as defender of the English seamen. The cause of Mr Plimsoll's indignation was the

proposed withdrawal of the Merchant Shipping Bill, which was intended to give a very much needed security for their lives to sailors. The affair is so vividly present to most memories that it need not be described at length. Let it suffice, by some letters of Sir Stafford's, to set forth his position in the dispute:—

Private.

11 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,
July 22, 1875.

MY DEAR MR DISRAELI,—May I offer the following suggestions as to the process of massacre?

1. Let the Attorney-General answer Dillwyn that the Patents Bill will be given up for want of time, and let him move then and there that the order be discharged.

2. When the orders of the day are called, you might rise and say that, after carefully considering the state of public business, you had come to the conclusion that it would be impossible to find time for a full discussion of the Merchant Shipping Bill; that you thought it undesirable to attempt to pass a mere fragment of so important a measure; and that you therefore moved to discharge the order, promising, at the same time, that the bill should have a first place among the measures of next session. (This would be quite in order, but, of course, it might lead to some debate both on merchant shipping in particular and on the course of business in general; but I do not see how you can avoid this under any circumstances.)

You might take the opportunity of saying that you meant to proceed with Agricultural Holdings till it was through Committee, then to take Supply, and the Judicature and Land Transfer Bills; that with regard to other business it was premature to speak, but that you would be in communication with the Ministers in charge of the several bills; and that you hoped to be able to make such arrangements as would enable the House to rise by the 10th or 12th August, and possibly even at a somewhat earlier date.

On this very day, July 22, Mr Disraeli announced that he did not intend to go on with the bill which so justly and deeply interested Mr Plimsoll. Then came Mr Plimsoll's display of passionate resentment, followed by sympathetic public meetings under Mr Chamberlain and other philanthropists. Replying to Mr Sullivan on the same night, Sir Stafford said that, even if the Agricultural

Holdings Bill had been out of the way, there was no time to discuss properly the Merchant Shipping Bill. The postponement of the bill "would forward the solution of the question rather than hinder it." Lord Hartington objected that this was "totally at variance with the statement which had been made by the Prime Minister," in announcing the withdrawal of the Merchant Shipping Bill.

On July 24, Sir Stafford wrote thus to Mr Disraeli:¹—

I see that the newspapers take up what Hartington said the other night of a supposed divergence between what I said in answer to Sullivan, and what you had previously said in announcing the withdrawal of the Merchant Shipping Bill. I am not conscious of any such divergence, but, as it may be made a topic in some attack, I am anxious to tell you exactly what I had in my mind, and what I now think of our position with regard to that bill.

The reason for my answering Sullivan was that several speakers in succession had charged us with indifference to the Merchant Shipping Bill, and with holding the Agricultural Bill as one of superior importance. I thought it would not do to let such charges go altogether unnoticed; and I therefore expressed again our great regret at having to withdraw the bill, and added that it was not from indifference, but from a sense of the impossibility of dealing satisfactorily with a measure of so much importance and difficulty at this period of the session, that we had done so. I said it would have been impossible to have dealt with it satisfactorily, even had there been no question of the Agricultural Holdings Bill. You had previously condemned the notion of passing a mutilated bill, and this is all that could have been done, if we had gone on with it in a jaded House,

and under other disadvantages which he describes.

It would, I am persuaded, be most injurious to our character if we allowed it to be supposed that, having a fair choice between the two bills, we had deliberately preferred the Agricultural Holdings Bill. We may, or may not, have made miscalculations in the earlier part of the session as to the length of time which discussions on various measures would take; but that is a

¹ The conclusion of the letter is omitted, as bearing on personal matters other than those of Sir Stafford, and not desirable to discuss.

more venial matter. What really killed the Merchant Shipping Bill was the discussion which its first clauses underwent in Committee, disclosing the difficulties under which it would have to be fought. . . . Whether we could have got over these difficulties had there been less other business may be a question. But we were under imperative necessity as regarded the Judicature Bill, the Labour Laws Bill, and Supply; and we had not time to grapple effectually with Merchant Shipping as it had by that time revealed itself to us.

And here let me call your attention to these points. We were proceeding with a bill drawn on the lines of the report of a Royal Commission. A Royal Commission does not encounter the various forces which make their appearance in a regular battle in a Committee of the whole House of Commons. Our bill was therefore undergoing a first sifting, and we were beginning for the first time to discover its faults and its deficiencies.

But further, it was not a bill for applying a direct and simple remedy to an admitted evil. The direct and simple remedy of authorising the Board of Trade to stop unseaworthy ships had already been applied by the Act of 1873; and the other direct and simple remedy which Plimsoll desired, of instituting a Government survey of all seagoing ships, we were not prepared to adopt. The principle of our bill was to throw a more complete responsibility upon shipowners; and the working out of this principle involved very complicated procedure in order to attain the object without doing injustice to any one. Mistakes in legislation of this kind are easily made, and are apt to be very mischievous. To have attempted to hurry the bill through would have been a great error. What I hope is that next year we shall be able to bring in a much better bill, availing ourselves of the experience of this year, and of the popular feeling which will support us if we act vigorously.

"The Merchant Shipping Bill," he said to Mr Disraeli (July 25, 1875), "has caused me more annoyances throughout the session than all the other bills put together, and perhaps I forgot myself a little in speaking my own mind under the provocation of Mr Sullivan's attack. We have a far better chance," he added, "of passing a really creditable bill, than we had with the deceased one." He made to Mr Disraeli, at this moment, an offer most public-spirited and disinterested, of which it may be improper to give a fuller account. It is enough to say that he was ready

to "take a lower place," and subordinate his personal ambitions to the needs of the Government. The offer was not accepted.

His own private views on the Merchant Shipping affair are contained in a letter to Mr Farrer (November 20). He wants to say to the shipowners:—

We mean to do our part, and at the same time to insist on your doing your part to prevent preventible evils. . . . We must insist that you shall not evade your responsibilities under the specious plea of freedom of contract, which is, or may be, a good enough plea as between the contracting parties, but is one to be very jealously scrutinised when it affects the lives of other persons. I am anxious to develop some such view as this at the very outset of our legislation next session.

The great affair of the autumn of 1875, the purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal for four millions, was necessarily a matter on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had his opinions. The full truth about that very odd transaction may not be known at present, and it was by no means possible to see how it could "secure our water-way to the East." The best naval opinion does not seem to bear out the theory popular at the time of the purchase. Iron, not gold, is the metal for these ends. Our whole policy in Egypt has ever been pretty much what the French have always called it. Sir Stafford's public remarks on this matter exactly correspond with his private statements. He saw the affair with the eyes of a loyal gentleman. First, let us take his public speech at Manchester (7th December 1875). The keynote of it is, that "England must do nothing mean. At home or abroad her policy must be noble and magnanimous." Now he distinctly and decidedly held that we had *not* been "magnanimous" in our dealings with France about the Canal. Here is an extract from his speech,—here he expresses his hopes and wishes as to our conduct in the future:—

If we have become the possessors of a considerable interest in that important highway of maritime communication, and if we have become the possessors of that interest with a view to the maintenance of our own communication with our Eastern empire,

we have not done so in a spirit of exclusive selfishness, but in the entirely opposite spirit, of desiring to extend to all nations that freedom of communication which we desire to secure for ourselves. We honour and respect and admire the energy and genius of those who planned, and who, against great difficulties, carried through that great enterprise. We desire in no degree to rob them of their fair share of the honour, or in any way to mar the great work which they contemplated. We fully believe that which they always said, that they undertook that work not in the interests of individuals, or in the interest of a single nation, but in the spirit of those who wish to make a name for themselves in the proud roll of the world's benefactors; and if we associate ourselves with that enterprise now, we do so, not in order to thwart, but to forward that enterprise: it is with the hope that the Canal, which will always remain the monument of the energy and of the perseverance of M. de Lesseps, and of the great nation which has borne so large a part in the work, may be maintained as a highroad for nations, and not exclusively for the benefit of any one. No; the spirit of English foreign policy must be the spirit of peace, not merely of an indolent or selfish peace, but of an active peace, and one which will propagate its principles,—our peace must be of a kind which is consistent with national honour. It must be the peace of the strong man armed, and not of the timorous man who cries "Peace" to keep the hands of others off him. It must be of a true, and not of a hollow character, and this pacific policy must be founded on a conviction of our duty and of our interests. England holds a high place amongst nations. We do not seek to compare ourselves with others. We are satisfied to know that our position is one which demands every exertion on our part to maintain and to justify. England must do nothing mean. At home or abroad her policy must be noble and magnanimous: we have a great opening, and if we are but true to ourselves, true to our fellow-citizens throughout the whole of the British Empire, and true in our dealings with foreign countries, I look never to see the time when England shall fall in the scale of nations.

So he spoke in public; and *this* was his language in private:¹—

Our policy, or our proceedings, with regard to the Canal, has not been such as to gain us much credit for magnanimity. We

¹ Letter to Mr Disraeli, November 26, 1875.

opposed it in its origin; we refused to help Lesseps in his difficulties; we have used it when it has succeeded; we have fought the battle of our shipowners very stiffly; and now we avail ourselves of our influence with Egypt to get a quiet slice of what promises to be a good thing.

Suspicion will be excited that we mean quietly to buy ourselves into a preponderating position, and then turn the whole thing into an English property.

I don't like it.

He might well dislike it. Our dealings in Egypt have been a cruel and crying scandal. The blood cries out against us, from the blood of Hicks and of Gordon to the latest drop that has stained the desert or the Nile.

Sir Stafford frankly remarks to Mr Disraeli at this moment, "I know so little of the actual state of our foreign relations." Who did know about it? Lord Derby was at the Foreign Office. "What would best suit us," says Sir Stafford, "would be an international arrangement by which the Canal could be placed under the guardianship of all the Powers interested in maintaining the communication." In this letter he suggests the sending of Mr Cave to see how the land lay, as the Khedive was requesting the assistance of two English men of affairs in his finance. "I am more inclined to seek my leverage in the acceptance of this mortgage by the Société Générale than in any attempt to get it for ourselves, which I fear may set other countries against us. We ought boldly to avow our legitimate interest in the question, and make a frank proposal" (November 23). "We are in deep water. . . . I am much averse from holding the shares, and greatly desirous to bring about an International Commission"¹ (November 24). Exactly the same opinion recurs in a letter to Lord Derby of the same date. And writing to Lord Carnarvon (December 3), he says that he and others "are decidedly against purchasing." The purchase was made, however, and in the House Sir Stafford had to defend Mr Disraeli's policy against the attacks of Mr Gladstone (February 21, 1876). "The question we have to determine is, whether the difficulties which my

¹ See his Speeches in 1876. Hansard and Annual Register.

right hon. friend tells us are inevitable, would not have been quite as formidable, or even more formidable, had we not purchased these shares." He admitted that the whole transaction was "unprecedented," but so is "the Suez Canal itself." The Khedive had a purchaser for his shares, but gave the English Government the refusal. "The matter would not let itself alone." As usual, there was a choice of difficulties, and Sir Stafford defended, without undue emphasis, the conduct of the Government.

The spirit of these words animated his speech in the House of Commons (February 14, 1876) after the shares had been purchased. He admitted and regretted that England, in the first place, had "to some extent impeded the operations" of M. Lesseps in the first instance. "Incredulity has its dupes," and England had been among them. "The Canal has been made, has been opened, and has proved to be of great advantage to England, while as respects the political inconveniences that would result from it, they are at all events as yet undeveloped." They have developed well enough since the disastrous ditch was dug. However, "the Canal at all events is a fact;" and he paid a high compliment, and a deserved compliment, to M. de Lesseps. "I am most anxious to speak with full and entire admiration of that gentleman." As to the purchase of the shares, there was another bidder in the market. "There are cases in which, after all, you must trust to the judgment of somebody." Apparently enough it was not to Sir Stafford's judgment that the Government trusted. He went with his chief. They had been asked whether the purchase was made "with reference to a state of war or of peace." "I, in answer to that question, say that I look upon the transaction as one of great importance for preventing complications, and for preserving peace." We now combined the characters of shareholders and customers.

The Budget of 1875 had been made without provision for certain Supplementary Estimates, notably for the Irish Education Vote. He had relied on an excess of revenue over estimate, which was looked on as "rather a novel and adventurous course." But the results justified his action,

and he maintained that in like circumstances he would act again in the same way. What with the Navy, Irish Education, the Prince of Wales's Indian tour, and so forth, the Supplementary Estimates reached the stately figure of a million and a half. His estimate of expenditure for the new year showed a considerable increase, which was exactly what critics expected from Conservative finance. There was more than a million for Army and Navy. This increase he did not discuss, admitting that, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he "looked very jealously" on it. £1,756,000 had been added for Army and Navy since the Conservatives entered on office. As to the increased charges for the Civil Service, the growth of population, and such measures as the Merchant Shipping Bill, with its staff of inspectors and officials, had made the increase inevitable. Naturally, in a world that clamours to be inspected, inspectors must be paid. Between 1873-74 and 1876, there had been an increase in Civil Service expenditure amounting to over £2,000,000. Of this the Education Estimates amounted to nearly one million; the increase in grants in aid of local taxation over £1,400,000. He deprecated partisan charges of extravagance. The increase was due, not to extravagance, but to "the increase of the charge for education, which I believe everybody welcomes, and to local taxation, which both our friends and our enemies tell us is a mere bagatelle."

The estimated revenue for the financial year 1876 fell below his estimate of expenditure by £774,000. Was the deficit to be covered by extra taxation, or by tampering with his new method for reducing the National Debt? The latter course would at a blow destroy his system. As the consumption of spirits was falling off, he had to increase the income-tax, of course with reluctance. He added a penny to the tax, but he would carry further the exemption of small incomes. When he spoke, £100 a-year was the limit for total exemption. This limit he raised to £150. A deduction of £80 was allowed on incomes of £300. He extended this principle, and allowed a deduction of £120 on all incomes of £400 or less. Thus all incomes below £150 were totally exempt from tax; and

incomes from £150 to £400 had £120 taken off. He estimated that the result would be a net receipt of £1,168,000; and, deducting the deficit of £800,000, the surplus would be £368,000.

This Budget, of course, was the Budget of a lean year. "The abounding surplus left by Mr Gladstone in 1874 had become a deficit," says the Liberal historian. What it would have become if Mr Gladstone had stayed in office and abolished the income-tax, doth not now appear. "Expenditure had begun to rise as soon as the Conservative Government came into power." *Why* it had risen has already been shown. The historian speaks of "decreasing trade," which affected the revenue of course. Is there any human being so credulous as to believe that, with the Liberals in office, trade would not have decreased? That, in the succeeding year, war expenses might not have been incurred if Mr Gladstone had been in office, and had managed Eastern affairs wisely, is a very different matter. That belongs to the science of hypothesis, and any one may sincerely believe that matters might have been kept quiet by a sagacious and well-informed policy. But our information came too late.

In 1877, Sir Stafford found his position fairly satisfactory; "not brilliant," but, considering the state of trade, not undeserving of thankfulness. The Supplementary Estimates were almost equalled (within £80,000) by the savings. "We may say that we have a Budget ready-made to our hands." Taxation could not be remitted, but need not be added to. The new Sinking Fund was working satisfactorily: £175,628 more than had been expected was applied to the reduction of the debt. He desired to keep down naval and military expenditure. There was a reduction in the estimates for the Army and Navy. The storms in the East soon called for more expenditure. It was natural for Liberal critics to impute the Eastern dangers to the Government; but foreign affairs, and Sir Stafford's opinions about them, must be reserved for another chapter.

In 1878 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech, had to consider both the ordinary and the extraordinary expenditure. The vote of credit for £6,000,000,

passed when Russia was at the gates of Constantinople, affected the finance of the year that had gone, and of the year that was coming. The estimates of next year's expenditure and revenue showed a deficiency of £1,560,000. To meet all charges, the income-tax was raised to five-pence, fourpence a-pound was put on tobacco, and the dog-tax was raised from five shillings to seven and six-pence, sheep-dogs being now exempted. Puppies over two months were to have been, but were not included, to meet the case of persons "whose dogs are never more than six months old." "It is much easier to know a puppy under two months than under six."

All this was "a necessarily unpleasant statement." Mr Gladstone said it was "a painful Budget," and disliked the distinction taken between ordinary and extraordinary expenditure in this instance. Mr Parnell propounded a short way to Home Rule—namely, by the Irish boycotting whisky, and so making it not worth while to keep them. The Irish members have it always in their power to set the example of this temperate revolution.

In 1879, the Chancellor was more than commonly aided in his calculations by amateur advisers. He received eighty separate suggestions that cats, photographs, bicycles, and, one may hope, pianos should be taxed. He could not accept any of these suggestions. His estimate of the revenue in the past year had "turned out, on the whole, not far from correct." But no mortal could have foreseen the Zulu war, and the extraordinary expenses which made it impossible to pay off the Exchequer bills of the previous year. The expenditure had exceeded the estimate by nearly four millions and a half. According to the Liberal historian,¹ the expenses of the armament at the time when Russian armies were close to Constantinople, "were regarded as the last war charges the generation would have to endure." Optimists who thought this did not foresee Isandhlwana, nor Afghanistan, nor Majuba (a feather in the Liberal cap), nor Alexandria, nor the Soudan, nor a number of other war charges not usually

¹ England under Lord Beaconsfield.

shaded with laurels. But when a nation with a finger in all the wide world's concerns expects to get rid of war charges, the beatitude of "those who expect little" is not likely to be its portion. Plenty of war charges most countries have, and are likely to have, whoever is in office. The year was also one of the gloomiest and most poverty stricken of all lean years. There was a deficiency of £2,291,000 to be added to that of the previous year. Sir Stafford denied that "we are going on entirely by borrowing money, and not paying anything out of taxation." The original £6,000,000 for preparation against Russia would have been paid off in three years, as intended, but for the Zulu war. "In point of fact we have paid off one half, and have prospects of paying off the other half rapidly." As for the deficiencies which actually existed, they might be paid off in whole or part by taxation, or be added to the permanent debt; "or there is another process, we can throw upon another year a portion of the payment." Everything showed that times were hard, even among the well-to-do class, and that additional taxation would be distressing. To add to the permanent debt would be "mischievous and enervating." He preferred the *via media*, "to extend payment of that debt over one year more" (*A laugh*). He thought honourable gentlemen laughed because they at once escaped taxation and could "enjoy the delightful amusement of abusing the Chancellor of the Exchequer." He was not, at all events, putting the new debt out of sight in the bulk of the National Debt. It was kept before our eyes, till we had satisfied ourselves we could pay it.

The circumstances in which this Budget had to be prepared—the general distress and poverty of the country, and the unexpected need of money for an inglorious war—naturally offered Mr Gladstone an opportunity for criticism in the House and out of it. He spoke on April 28, attacking the policy which had led to the expenditure. "Errors of policy have led to a vast expenditure." The nature of these errors—and errors there had undoubtedly been—will be examined in a subsequent chapter. More to the present point is Mr Gladstone's argument, that it

was an absolute and primary duty for the Government to meet the expenditure by adequate taxation. The Government had gone annexing about: "Thou hast multiplied the nation, but not increased its joy." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, was more concerned, not in wasting the millions, but in the mode and principles on which our finance was conducted. Mr Gladstone thought that, in the last forty years, no man had taken the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer "with as great a capacity for the discharge of its duties on the whole, from his general intelligence, his experience, knowledge, and assiduity combined," as Sir Stafford. But he, in Mr Gladstone's opinion, had wandered further than any "from the well-known traditional and salutary principles of English finance." Sir Stafford was informing the country, which does not read speeches but summaries, that there is a surplus of £1,904,000. Here one cannot but remark on the method of our Government. We are governed by "the country," and not more than one person in a thousand, according to Mr Gladstone, reads more than half-a-dozen lines of summary of speeches in the House. No exact estimate of the expense of the Zulu war could of course be framed, but "a large and a free estimate" should have been taken. Sir Stafford must be the "organ," not the "author" of the methods of the Government. Real financial control on such methods was becoming impossible. As to the distress of the country, where did Sir Stafford learn to regard *that* as a reason "why the public income shall not be made adequate to meet the charge"? As to the *via media*, Sir Stafford had once called it "a financial nostrum."

Sir Stafford defended himself as best he could. He had not shrunk from adding to the income-tax, nor from retaining that addition. His policy was to try to keep the income-tax steady. Very few other sources of taxation were left,—it was wiser to spread large and temporary expenditure over several years than to disturb taxation. As to "financial nostrums," that remark of his referred to another and very different condition of things. "I say, then, that it is perfectly legitimate and reasonable for us

to take this course, instead of increasing the burdens of the people at this moment, and putting on them the weight of additional taxation. It would depress the commerce and trade of the country at the very moment when we seek to enliven it." Mr Gladstone himself had spread his expenditure for fortifications over twenty-five years, and had even postponed, in 1860, £1,000,000 of Exchequer bonds. The position of England must be kept up, expenditure or no expenditure, or must be frankly withdrawn from. "Let us close the chapter—as I think the glorious chapter—in the history of England; let us frankly say that we can no longer afford to maintain the attitude which we have hitherto endeavoured to maintain." Or let us pay for it! The attempt to find a *via media* in the Transvaal, for example, has not been a brilliant success.

I have tried to give as brief and lucid an account as possible of the main arguments on either side as to this Budget of 1879. It is not to be denied that it was far from an ideal arrangement, that Mr Gladstone had fair grounds for his criticism. But, on the other hand, the defence was not devoid of spirit and plausibility. The attack can always occupy the ground of the ideals of what might and should be, and so is always theoretically victorious. Mr Gladstone returned to the charge in the 'Nineteenth Century' (August 1879). With a complimentary reference to Mr Spurgeon, he remarked that "the stain of blood may be effaced from our coming, but not from our past, annals." Unluckily, our coming annals, under Mr Gladstone, were to be stained with blood, chiefly our own; and some persons with archaic instincts will add, still unavenged.

The Budget of 1880 was the last that Sir Stafford had to prepare in that period of Conservative rule. It was haunted by the influence of hard times. The estimate of revenue was disappointed by more than £2,000,000. The Zulu war had cost more than £5,000,000, a prodigious sum to expend in a war with a wild people, armed with stabbing assegais, and muskets with which they could not shoot straight. The votes of credit had covered the expenses, and left a balance of £177,000. This was a

grain of comfort. The savings had more than covered the Supplementary Estimates. "The result, therefore, although it is bad enough, is not so bad as might at first sight be thought." The Excise showed a huge deficiency in the usual consumption of spirits and malt. There was a floating debt of £8,000,000, £6,000,000 of which Sir Stafford proposed to extinguish by the creation of a terminable annuity, to last till 1885. He was compelled to appropriate his New Sinking Fund of about £600,000 to this annuity, and to add to the usual £28,000,000, £800,000 for the next five years, applying that £800,000, with the other £600,000, to the discharge of these annuities. In five years the £6,000,000 would thus be paid off. When the arrangement was complete, he left the Budget with a surplus of £1,841,000, and he hoped for better times (March 10, 1880). Mr Gladstone naturally did not repine over the "immolation of the New Sinking Fund." On March 15, Sir Stafford denied that he was about to immolate his New Sinking Fund—like a Carthaginian prince sending his first-born through the fire to Moloch. He only meant to use a portion of it for a particular purpose for a certain number of years. "The Sinking Fund would go on all the while." He was satisfied that the arrangement was one of the most reasonable that could be submitted, unless they increased taxation. He repeated that the increased expenditure of his administration was due in great part to the action of the preceding Government, as in the Education Act, and other costly "improvements."

The general election of 1880 ended, of course, Sir Stafford's tenure of office. His apologies failed to satisfy a suffering and ill-contented country, yearning for a change. It is common among early peoples in a similar strait, to kill the king, on a chance of better luck with a new monarch. We changed our Ministry. As for the heavily burdened Chancellor of the Exchequer, perhaps it may be admitted that he made as good a business as might be of an all but impossible task. How to make England stand where she did, without burdening a people which declines to be burdened, was the problem, a problem beyond human adroitness to achieve with complete success.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TROUBLES IN THE EAST.

THE whole business of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been thwarted by the course of foreign politics. Even more than most men the steward of English economy has need to pray for "peace in our time." But peace was not granted to us, and Sir Stafford's own views of the famous Eastern troubles of 1875-78, his own share in what was done and said, are matters of high importance in his biography. As it chances, he drew up "Some Notes on the Foreign Policy of the late Government," chiefly referring to the affairs of Turkey and Russia, shortly after leaving office in 1880. Nothing can be more fair than to let him tell his own story, with such omissions, where others still living are concerned, and such notes as may be desirable or necessary. It is unfortunate that the whole of the piece cannot be given to the world. But every one knows how impossible it is to produce a version of oral discussions in which all persons concerned will agree; and this reason, not to mention the etiquette which protects, or should protect, Cabinet Councils, must reduce a most valuable document to fragments.

In this Note, which we are reluctantly compelled to mutilate, Sir Stafford writes:—

I have no thought of making an elaborate exposition of the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration, but I wish to preserve a few things which were not generally known, or which may easily be forgotten or misrepresented. Writing without the various memoranda before me, and after the lapse of three or four years, I may easily myself have forgotten some points; but I will try to put my recollections into shape.

The troubles in the east of Europe began with the Herzegovinese insurrection in 1875. Little notice was taken of this insurrection at the outset. We were abroad for some weeks in the autumn, and the only reference to the matter which I can recall was in a paragraph in the 'Figaro,' in which the writer describes the Parisians as wondering whether *la Herzegovine* was

the name of a new ballet-dancer or of a musical instrument invented by Herz.

As the autumn advanced, and the inability of the Porte to suppress the disturbances became more and more apparent, our attention was naturally aroused. At length the Andrassy Note was drawn up, and our concurrence was requested.¹

We were unanimously in favour of adhering to the Note. Parliament subsequently approved our course, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington seeming a little jealous of our following the lead of Austria, and putting in a word on behalf of the "independence of the Ottoman Empire," Gladstone, on the other hand, cordially approving our acting with the other Powers, and expressing his hope that we were going seriously to press for Turkish reforms. I remember Disraeli's wondering what he meant by his rather curious speech, which at the moment seemed somewhat uncalled for; but it is worth looking back to as containing the germ of much that he has said since.²

In the month of May the three Powers proceeded a step further, and drew up the celebrated Berlin Note, or, as it was afterwards called, the Berlin Memorandum. It was presented for acceptance to the Governments of England, France, and Italy, and an answer was requested by return of post. France and Italy agreed at once.

The Memorandum advocated a two months' armistice in Herzegovina, negotiations for peace, a mixed Commission to distribute aid, Christians and Turks to keep their arms, consuls and delegates of the Powers to watch over the promised reforms and the return of refugees to their homes.

Sir Stafford next states, at some length, the reasons

¹ In the Andrassy Note of Dec. 30, 1875, Austria, Germany, and Russia demanded that the Porte should grant promised reforms, hinted at further complications in Servia and Montenegro, and urged collective European action.

² Mr Gladstone, in his speech of Feb. 8, 1876, had said, "Europe, the Christian conscience, and the conscience of mankind, will expect some other sort of security for great and dreadful grievance than mere words can afford; and however desirous we may be to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire, that integrity and independence can never be maintained effectually unless it can be proved to the world, —and proved not by words but by acts,—that the Government of Turkey has the power to administer a fair measure of justice to all its subjects alike, whether Christians or Mohammedan."

which induced the Government not to adhere to the Berlin Memorandum:—

It seemed to demand impossibilities, and was not in our judgment well qualified to attain its object. We therefore declined to make ourselves responsible for it; but we intimated that we should not offer any objection to the other Powers proceeding upon its lines without us. We have been much blamed for contenting ourselves with the rejection of the Note, without proposing any alternative course of action. I remember feeling at the time that we ought to make some alternative proposal.

Sir Stafford Northcote then describes his own scheme, and the assent and dissent which it provoked; but this is not matter for publication. He goes on:—

But the revolution which soon after took place at Constantinople¹ seemed to change the whole face of things, and we began to hope that all would go well. The action of England had produced a good effect abroad, and it seemed probable that our influence with the new Government of Turkey might lead to considerable improvements in her administration. The Berlin Memorandum was laid aside, and, if peace could be maintained, time might bring about a better state of things.

The principal dangers to be guarded against were an attack upon Turkey by Russia alone, or by Russia and Austria conjointly, or a war between Turkey and Serbia and Montenegro. There seemed no real ground for apprehending the former contingency, after the stand which England had shown her readiness to make. As to a war with Serbia, it was pretty sure to end in her defeat, if she were not secretly supported by a stronger Power. The great object was, therefore, to bring the influence of the Powers to bear on Serbia to induce her to keep the peace. And this it seemed probable that we should have effected, if it had not been for the lamentable "Bulgarian atrocities," and their *contre-coup* in the English agitation.

The Bulgarian atrocities were committed throughout May. The 'Daily News' published a letter on them from Constantinople, on June 23; Serbia declared war on July 1.

It was undoubtedly most unfortunate that . . . we were kept in almost entire ignorance until the public were startled by the

¹ It ended in the murder of the Sultan.

horrible accounts given in the 'Daily News'; and we were at first disposed to believe that these accounts were monstrously exaggerated. The Prime Minister, when questioned about them, meant to say nothing more than that he could not believe them; but very unfortunately the House caught up an expression which he rather carelessly made use of, and laughed as if he had said a good thing, thus giving the public an impression that he treated these horrors lightly. I was sitting next him at the time he spoke, and heard him say to himself rather angrily, "What is there to laugh at?"

The reference is probably to Mr Disraeli's reply on June 28, or to that of July 10: "Oriental people seldom resort to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious way." The whole speech is at variance with the flippancy of this one unhappy expression, which, indeed, was tacitly apologised for by what followed.

Gladstone was not in the House, I think, when the last discussion on this subject took place—on Evelyn Ashley's motion. It would have been better if he had been, and if he had made his attack where it could have been properly answered. He took the unfortunate course of a violent extra-parliamentary series of pamphlets and speeches, denouncing the conduct of the Government in the most outrageous and exaggerated manner. Answers were given; but they were of no avail, because they could not be given face to face, and it was easy to ignore them. The mischief done in England, indeed, was not very great. The public knew what this sort of party declaration was worth; and they were perfectly aware that the Conservatives and the Government were just as indignant with the Turkish Government as Mr Gladstone and the Radicals. They understood, too, that the action of the Government in sending the fleet to Besika Bay (June 1878) was not an indication of our intention to support the Turks in the commission of any barbarities, but was a step taken to prevent the possible "ugly rush" which it was thought that Russia might make to Constantinople, and against which no other Power could be relied on to make a stand if England did not. But abroad a different effect was produced. The Russophil party believed, or professed to believe, that Mr Gladstone and the Liberals had made up their minds to join in, or to facilitate the overthrow of the Turk, and that they were on the

point of carrying England with them, upsetting the Conservative Government, and giving the hand to the Russian emancipators of the oppressed Christians. The Turks, on the other hand, were undoubtedly led to believe that the Conservatives were their friends in the sense in which Mr Gladstone and his satellites declared them to be; and that, deny it as we might, lecture them as we pleased, it was certain that in the last resort we should be found ready to fight for them. Both parties, therefore, were for urging matters to extremity,—the Russophils hoping that, if a war broke out, the Conservative Government would be overthrown, and that England would come forward on the side of the insurgents; the Turkophils hoping that the Conservatives would carry the day, and that, if they did so, England would be found on the side of the Porte. Agents of the English Liberal press were actively employed, I believe, in stirring up the Servians, just as the Russian Slavophils were doing; and they succeeded but too well in precipitating the conflict, which the Cabinets of all the nations concerned were most anxious to avert.

I remember a curious little conversation which I had this autumn with Mr Bright, whom I met in a railway carriage. He argued that we had no business to mix ourselves up in quarrels 3000 miles away, with which we had no concern. There would be horrors and sufferings, no doubt, if the struggle which we were endeavouring to avert took place, but we should do no good by interfering, and had better let the "natural forces" work of themselves. I said, "Yes; but what were we to call the 'natural forces'?" Was Austria, for instance, to be regarded as a 'natural force'?" "Certainly not," he said; "if we do not interfere ourselves, we must not let others interfere." "But how are we to prevent them?" said I. "Oh!" said he, "I suppose Russia is the greatest Power by land, and you are the greatest Power by sea; so if you came to an agreement with her, you could between you warn off everybody else." "And keep the ring?" I said. "Yes," said he. This was rather a foreshadowing of the "hands off" policy.

It cannot be denied that there were real though suppressed differences of opinion and feeling among the members of the Cabinet with regard to our Eastern policy. In private conversation Mr Disraeli gave a humorous account of the six parties in the Cabinet. "The first party is that which is for immediate war with Russia; the second party is for war to save Constantinople; the third party is the party of Peace at any Price; the fourth party would let the Russians take Constantinople,

and would then turn them out; the fifth party desires to plant the cross on the dome of St Sophia; and then there are the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who desire to see something done, but don't exactly know what."

We could not stand by [Sir Stafford goes on] and see Russia take possession of Constantinople. But how were we to prevent her? We could not join Turkey, for that would be to encourage her to persevere in her system of misgovernment, and we should be left saddled with the responsibility of either upholding what we most thoroughly condemned and abhorred, or of compelling the Porte to mend its ways, a task somewhat more than impossible for us to perform. We had also before our eyes the continual fear that Turkey might, after all, throw herself into the arms of Russia, perhaps invite Russian troops to Constantinople, and adopt an "Unkiar Skelessi" policy.

Here Sir Stafford discusses the military position and strength of England, in case, for example, Gallipoli should be threatened. He expresses his regret that "Gladstone gave up Corfu, which would have been invaluable," and he hints at a pet plan of his own for buying an island dear to archaeologists. Doubtless those desires led to the purpose of acquiring Cyprus.

He now turns to the famous incident of Lord Derby's resignation and revelations.

It will be remembered that Lord Derby stated in the House of Lords that when he left the Government we had decided on a buccaneering expedition for the purpose of seizing some Turkish territory, and that Lord Salisbury very pointedly contradicted him on the authority not only of his own memory, but of the memories of several of his colleagues.

Lord Derby announced his resignation in the House of Lords, March 28, 1878. He "gave those with whom he had acted entire credit for desiring as much as he desired the maintenance of the peace of Europe, . . . but in the measures which they propose I have not been able to concur." On March 29, Sir Stafford, answering Lord Hartington, said that "when the resolution to call out the Reserves had been taken, Lord Derby dissented from it, and felt obliged to tender his resignation." On April 8, Lord Derby told the House of Lords that this

calling out the Reserves "was not the sole, nor indeed the principal reason" for the difference between himself and his late colleagues. "What the other reasons are I cannot divulge, until the propositions of the Government, from which I dissented, are made known." On July 18, Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, said that he had quitted the Cabinet because "the island of Cyprus, together with a point on the Syrian coast, were to have been seized by a secret naval expedition sent out from England, with or without the consent of the Sultan."¹ Lord Salisbury denied that the account of this resolution of the Cabinet was "true," as far as his own memory went, or "correct." Withdrawing the expression "true," he solemnly repeated, in the name of his colleagues, that Lord Derby's statement was not "correct," though, of course, it was only the accuracy of Lord Derby's memory, not his veracity, which Lord Salisbury impugned.

On this Sir Stafford writes :—

Lord Salisbury was quite justified in his contradiction ; but I have no doubt that Lord Derby gave correctly his own impression of what had passed. The Cabinet to which he referred was the last which he attended. It was at a moment of extreme anxiety, when the Russians appeared to be advancing on Constantinople, and when we had some reason to apprehend a still more inconvenient advance to the coast of Asia Minor, where they might seize points which would threaten the Suez Canal and the Euphrates Valley, and so intercept our communications with India.

Sir Stafford here gives his own version of what occurred at the Cabinet Council after which Lord Derby resigned. Certain proposals, concerning which his memory was rather indefinite, were made, he says, and "the matter was then laid aside." The question of calling out the Reserves was then mooted, as Lord Derby himself informed the House of Lords. In Sir Stafford's opinion, Lord Derby having made up his mind to resign, failed perfectly to distinguish between a *conversation* about certain undecided points, and a *decision* about another point, the Reserves.

¹ Hansard, ccxli. 1793.

We now reach an explanation of his own conduct in a matter where he incurred some blame, and where a politician less transparently candid might have incurred more.

Salisbury had taken the Foreign Office, and his "happy despatch," as it was called, reviewing the situation of affairs as left by the Treaty of San Stefano, had produced a great effect both at home and abroad. It looked as though we might now hope to bring about a fair and free conference without any more military demonstrations. The Easter recess was approaching, and it was becoming necessary to fix the length of the holidays. As Parliament had met on the 18th January, and Easter did not fall until the 21st April, it was reasonable that we should have a longer recess than usual, and it had been long understood that it should be so; but there was some uneasiness in the public mind, and many rumours were afloat as to possible surprises, which caused some of the Opposition to question me very closely as to its being safe for the House to adjourn for so long a period. I felt myself entitled to hold the most reassuring language,

for which he assigns excellent reasons.¹

I gave my answer in the House in a tone which I could not have adopted had I thought the Indian troops were to be moved. Unfortunately, public arrangements were being made for the immediate formation of a *corps d'armée* for embarkation before the monsoon. These steps were instantly telegraphed to England, and on the morning after the adjournment they appeared in all our newspapers. The Duke of Richmond and I were in the train together, I going to Osborne and he to Goodwood; we bought the 'Times' at the station, and there, to the amazement of us both, we read what was going on. It was a great annoyance to me, for I felt that I should be accused of disingenuousness; had the troops been sent to any foreign country, which I daresay some would have liked, I should have felt myself in a great difficulty.²

Sir Stafford now describes the internal difficulties and dissensions of the Cabinet, which became sufficiently well understood in the course of events. The position was critical; Russia was almost at the gates of Constantinople. Her assurances about occupying Constantinople

¹ Hansard, ccxxxix. 1391, 1392.

² See Hansard, ccxxxix. 1421.

only if absolutely necessary, and not for military honour, were not exactly calculated to inspire confidence. In war, as in love,

"The strongest oaths are straw
To the fire in the blood."

The nature of the terms of peace was not known, and arrangements for armistice were delayed. As to the indemnity to be exacted by Russia, Sir Stafford has been accused of "strange forgetfulness." On the 30th July the Czar had told Colonel Wellesley to tell the British Government that he would annex nothing but a portion of Bessarabia, and another of Armenia, and the same promise had been made by the Russian Chancellor to our Minister at St Petersburg. Sir Stafford was aware of all this, and he is charged with "forgetfulness" because, on January 28, he had professed not to know what Russia's exactions of territorial indemnity might turn out to be. He is said to have "forgotten" these Russian promises. But, in such summary of the intended terms of peace as he had before him when he spoke, it was written, "Indemnity to Russia, in a pecuniary, territorial, or other form, to be decided hereafter."¹ This was a clause which *donne furieusement à penser*. Could a statesman regard its vagueness as a guarantee that circumstances had not altered cases and old promises? At all events, the situation of affairs was most anxious, and it was desired to send the fleet to the Dardanelles. Then followed the wonderful confusion which Sir Stafford thus describes:—

In the midst of these anxieties came the extraordinary telegram in which Layard announced that the terms or bases of peace had been agreed to, and that the last of them was that the question of the Straits should be settled between "the Congress and the Emperor of Russia." This fell amongst us like a bomb-shell. Our justification for sending up the fleet was, that we feared that a private arrangement would be made about the Straits between the Turks and the Russians, to the exclusion

¹ Hansard, ccxxxvii. 540.

and the detriment of other Powers, and here were the Russian terms of peace, by which this question was to be reserved to be settled by a Congress! What could we say to justify ourselves? And how much would not the difficulty of the situation be increased by the emphatic dissent and resignation of Lord Derby? After a little hasty consultation with those of our colleagues who were in the House of Commons, I went up to Downing Street, taking Smith with me. We found Lord Beaconsfield in bed, but quite able to talk the matter over with us. The result was that we agreed to stop Admiral Hornby before he entered the Dardanelles, where he had been led to expect that he might find orders. Smith despatched an Admiralty telegram at once. It was not in time to stop the fleet, but it brought it back again to the entrance of the Strait. Looking back, I think this was the greatest mistake we made in the whole business: but at the moment we were all agreed on it. The next day came a correction of the telegram: it was not between the Emperor and the Congress that question of the Straits was to be settled, but between the Emperor and the Sultan! How we gnashed our teeth!

Lord Derby's first resignation was withdrawn, the breach was patched up, but "*quod semel excidit*"¹ does not generally admit of being replaced, and there was no very real cordiality during the remainder of Derby's administration. The Russians kept up the anxiety which had led us to call for the vote of credit, and we found ourselves obliged to make more use of the money than we had intended. At length came the question of the Reserves, and of the sending up the fleet to the Bosphorus, and the movement of the Indian troops; and so Derby finally departed from us. Salisbury sprang into the saddle, and at once produced his celebrated despatch (April 2, 1878). Nothing could be more successful, and both at home and abroad it produced a marked impression.

Nothing could exceed the immediate success of the new despatch, so far as applause went; but after a little while people began to ask what was to come of it. The object of all parties was to bring about a Congress which should establish a peace: the difficulty was to settle what questions were to be submitted to it. England was anxious that it should decide all matters that might be brought forward touching, or growing out of, the new arrangements that must be made for Turkey, excepting only such questions as were purely matter of concern for the two

¹ Quotation from Horace, Odes, iii. 5. 30.

belligerents alone—such, for instance, as exchanges of prisoners and the like. Russia claimed the right of settling with Turkey alone all questions whatever, except such as she herself might allow to be of European concern. It was difficult to find a *mezzo termine* between these conflicting pretensions, and it still seemed doubtful whether a Congress could be brought about; while, if it should fail, the prospect of maintaining peace was very cloudy.

Sir Stafford now describes the reasons which made Lord Salisbury think it desirable to come to a separate and secret understanding with Count Schouvaloff. Without such understanding the Congress would never have taken place. "There was nothing discreditable in it; but there is no doubt that its disclosure, at the moment when that disclosure took place, was extremely embarrassing, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary having both left England."

The fragments which have been quoted may serve to explain Sir Stafford's own conduct and attitude on certain occasions. As to the whole phase of the Eastern question, which puzzled politicians and divided society in 1876-78, Sir Stafford's opinions were calm, just, and statesmanlike. Even the most excited friends of the oriental Christians could scarcely accuse *him* of "sympathising with the oppressors." Like any English statesman in office, he was compelled to see that the question was not simple, was not to be settled off-hand by kindly sympathy and sentiment. The Turks had behaved abominably; the Christians had been mercilessly treated—granted, but what was to be done? In the autumn of 1876 he had to speak on the subject in Edinburgh, and he uttered the daring truism (for in England a truism may be daring) that, as to foreign policy, "the people of this country, as a rule, do not understand it." They see a wrong done; they cry out to have it righted. How, by whom, and what next? These are questions too distant and refined. In his own words, Sir Stafford told these truths to the people of Edinburgh, assuring them that the policy of the Government was the attainment of honourable peace. But at that hour

most of the people who now (1890) cry out against coercing Ireland were crying out in favour of coercing Turkey. Sir Stafford declared that his party desired peace and the good government "of all nations." It was a question of means, not of ends, how these results were to be secured. At Nostell Priory (September 26) he tried to make his audience understand the outlines of the Eastern question, the complications. "You must study the question carefully, and you must not take short cuts to your ends, and think that by denouncing the Turks and the Turkish power you have done all that has to be done." At Bristol (13th November 1876), he denied that Ministers only exist to do the bidding of the noisiest agitators, in place of following the bidding of their consciences. "Let that doctrine creep in, and good-bye to our liberty." In his private correspondence he remarks, "We may escape war, and I am anti-jingo enough to go strongly for anything that will keep us out of it."

The Eastern question [he writes to a private correspondent] is not to be solved by such simple phrases as *turning the Turks out of Europe*. How are you going to make them go? Have you estimated the amount of human suffering that you must cause in the process? I say nothing as to the horrors of a general war, which may very easily be provoked by a false step; but looking to the position of the Christians in Turkey itself, do you think nothing of the calamities you may bring upon them, by arousing the fanaticism of the Moslem, and that, too, a fanaticism of despair?

In another private letter to Sir Thomas Farrer (October 18, 1876), Sir Stafford remarks:—

We are bound by every consideration of honour and policy to do what we can, whether it be little or much. Of the two courses between which, broadly speaking, the choice lies, one is easy enough—the promoting a general unsettlement and conflict of forces, in the hope of its resulting in some settlement of some kind. I mean that if we decided on this course, we should not have the smallest difficulty in bringing about the conflict; whether the settlement would come out of it is another question. The other course is far more embarrassing, how to get a settlement without a conflict, and it at once leads us to two divergent paths, one of which lies in the direction of European constitution-

making for Turkey, and the other in that of calling on Turkey to make a better constitution for herself. I am greatly averse from the former alternative, believing that we shall simply make a messier mess than the present, and involve ourselves in great responsibilities without any adequate corresponding advantages. The latter seems to me more reasonable in itself. . . . We might criticise Turkey's proposals, and even offer suggestions, but we must leave the responsibility of making her constitution with herself. If everybody was disposed to give everybody fair play, this might answer. But our atrocitarians will denounce such proposals here, and the intriguers would do their best to make every constitution unworkable, so that fair play would be unattainable.

These selections from letters have been made to show the attitude of Sir Stafford at that unhappy crisis when England, as usual, was so divided. Many of us were in that old Puritan frame of mind, which could be satisfied with little less than the hewing piecemeal of the abominable Turk before the Lord. Not only had every humane feeling been hurt, but we felt a sense of national dishonour. But for England, Turkey would long ago, in all probability, have been free of pashas and Bashi-Bazouks. Mixed with this not unnatural nor unworthy sentiment appeared more party excitement than was creditable. In a letter from a lady to Sir Stafford I find her saying, "——" (a versatile and prominent Liberal leader) "writes that he had no idea the Bulgarian atrocities would turn out such a clipper." *Turn out such a clipper!* is this a generous or a philanthropic sentiment? We were hurried along then, by feelings good and bad, and many did not pause on such reflections as Sir Stafford suggests. If we had helped to "coerce" Turkey, and if Turkey, declining to be coerced, had preferred to go down with the Crescent flying, and to blow up the magazine! little would philanthropy have gained by that, and the odds are long that, when Turkey sank, others would have been dragged down in the vortex. On the other hand, there was an unintelligent and braggadocio ferocity in the contemporary Turcophile, which disgusted a sober mind with our old ally and with his new partisans. It appears that Sir Stafford, who of

all men could least be said to sympathise with atrocity, had no private wish, and aimed at no policy but that which would secure the maximum of reform with the minimum of disturbance and conflict. But conflict became inevitable. Whether a different policy on the part of England would or would not have evaded it, can only be called a problem in historical hypothetics. Russia was victorious, and with her victory came new dangers, not unforeseen. The present Sir Stafford Northcote tells us that a Russian gentleman of distinction once dined with Sir Stafford in the heat of the discussions about Constantinople. Whether he had drunk "in Scythian fashion" or not, he became very loud in abuse of England. Sir Stafford listened in silence till he said, "You English are like the pigs which hunt in dirt for truffles." "Say rather, monsieur," remarked Sir Stafford, "the dogs which drive the pigs away." The other filled his glass, put it down untasted, and said, "I have spoken too much."

What Sir Stafford thought and said elsewhere exactly corresponded to the line he took in Parliament. It is not possible, of course, to publish again all his remarks in the many debates of 1877-78. A very brief summary must suffice. He constantly resisted the attempt to saddle his party with a desire to make war for Turkey, or to encourage Turkey.¹ He reiterated that, from the beginning, the Government had asked Turkey to show energy, not in "stamping out" the insurrection, but by "manfully grappling with its real causes." He denounced the habit of "emphasising everything that can tell against your own country." The Government believed as thoroughly as Mr Gladstone himself in the necessity for reform in Turkish rule. They had used "the strongest pressure short of coercion." He put no faith at all in Turkish promises and paper constitutions. "Constitutions are the growth of centuries:" "it is ridiculous to suppose that the mere proclamation of a constitution, without guarantee that it will be properly administered, could produce any sensible results." As to "British interests," he spoke of them "in the broadest and highest sense," that of "honourable peace."

¹ February 8, 1877. Hansard, ccxxxiii. 97.

He denied that Lord Salisbury had pursued a private policy, apart from his instructions, at Constantinople. Again and again, later, he denied that the interests of England were opposed to the interests of humanity; that the Government preached "a gospel of selfishness." Government would go all lengths, short of threatening Turkey with war. They would not threaten, and then refuse to act. Such a policy would ruin any chance of what is called moral coercion, and true coercion "was not very far from meaning destruction."¹ His policy was strict neutrality. His conduct in the anxious weeks when Russian forces were almost within striking distance of Constantinople, has already been described. He maintained, with reference to our need of the vote for six millions, "that no one will be listened to unless he is strong."²

Reduced to its briefest and plainest expression, this is the sum of Sir Stafford's opinions and policy during a bewildering and exciting series of events. Even his opponents could hardly reckon him among the amateurs of oppression; and the charges of want of candour, in his answers in the House of Commons, which were brought against him, have been dealt with by himself.

There was very much more trouble and anxiety to follow. On the glorious advent of Peace with Honour from Berlin, it might have been hoped, it was hoped, that they would abide unwinged among us. But Russia had her revenge, and our Indian troops had scarcely gone back from Malta, when her Mission set forth and was received at Cabul. The whole tragedy of error that ensued cannot be unfolded here. We, too, must have our Mission at Cabul: its advance was resisted; we forced our way by arms, and took the usual military steps towards making Afghanistan friendly and independent. Here we are only concerned with Sir Stafford Northcote's part in the unhappy business. He was well known as a believer in Lord Lawrence's policy, not a forward, but a backward style of defence. When he, then, remained a member of a Government whose style was emphatically

¹ Hansard, ccxxxiii. 468.

² Hansard, ccxxvii. 558.

forward, he might be charged, and was charged, with inconsistency.

On August 15, after questions as to the proposed Mission to Cabul had been asked by Sir Charles Dilke and others, Sir Stafford explained that the Ameer did not invite the Mission, but that a communication about it would be made to him by the Indian Government. He added that we did not ask for what we had never possessed, a European agent at Cabul. Parliament broke up; negotiations and delays occurred on the Indian frontier; Sir Neville Chamberlain, with a numerous armed Mission, set out from Peshawur on September 21, and Major Cavagnari was refused leave to pass the fort of Ali Musjid. The Mission returned to Peshawur. The rebuff of the barbarians excited many observers in India and at home. There were explanations, demands for apology, and talk about a new scientific frontier. Afghanistan was invaded, and Parliament met on December 5.

From a letter of September 30, to an official colleague, it is clear that Sir Stafford, at that moment, had grave doubts as to the policy of Lord Lytton in India. The Ameer's conduct, he thought, "if not a breach of engagement" (in receiving the Russian embassy), "may be a virtual repudiation of the old state of our relations, and may justify and require a new departure on our part, and this I think it does. Only I think we should be well informed at the outset what the new policy is to be." In a later letter (October 2) he says: "The old policy used to be, to keep Afghanistan strong and independent, not to interfere with its internal affairs, not to annex or occupy any of its territories, but to cultivate friendly relations with its *ex officio* ruler, . . . and to obviate the danger of internal conflicts." As to the new policy, he says, "It may be right, or it may be inevitable, but we ought to know how far it is to be carried."

To a lay looker-on, it seems as if Russia had out-manœuvred us. If Cabul accepted a Mission from her, not from us, where was our prestige? The word is unlucky, but it does express that kind of influence of belief in her by which England has governed India. Object as we may

to the word, or to what it implies, the fact is undeniable. If, on the other hand, we bullied the Ameer, or put him in such a position that he, too, must lose *his* prestige among his own people, we were at once involved in all that our enemies could desire for us. There may have been a middle course; it may have been possible to turn on our own side, and to our own profit, the oriental system of delays. Experts may discuss this. As things fell out, we took the second course, by affronting the Ameer, of which we soon felt all the disadvantages and discredits. The Liberal party, when Parliament met, maintained that the Ameer had been misrepresented and ill treated, while our old policy as to Afghanistan had been reversed. The details are vast and complicated, and it is no part of our business to defend or arraign either the Government or Lord Lytton. Sir Stafford Northcote's own speech mainly concerns us where it offers a defence of his own conduct (December 13, 1878). He maintained that, after the incident of Ali Musjid, the Ameer had been given "ample opportunity of recalling and apologising for his conduct," and that, as he did not apologise, the Government had no alternative. "We could not have remained inactive." He defended himself against the charge of "having turned round," and after being known as an advocate of one policy, embracing another. He rested his case on letters of Lord Lawrence, written to himself when he was Secretary for India. These letters gave Lord Lawrence's policy. He had agreed with it then, he agreed with it still, for Lord Lawrence had said it was "one thing to leave the Afghans to fight their own battles, and quite another to stand by in the same attitude while others are interfering." And Sir Stafford had, even then, recorded his opinion that if Shere Ali tampered with the Persians about Herat, we might give aid to his rival. Others were now interfering, by the Russian Mission, in Afghanistan. Circumstances had altered, and his mind had changed with them.

Again, Lord Lawrence thought we should await a Russian move on our own frontier. Yes; but in 1866 Russia had been far more remote from Afghanistan than she

was in 1878. When a Russian Mission went to Cabul, avowedly because Russia and England were unfriendly, and Cabul was a vulnerable point, then, "the circumstances on which Lord Lawrence based his policy of not advancing were completely revolutionised." Thus there was, in his own conduct, "no inconsistency whatever." We defeated the Ameer, he died, we appointed Yakooob as Ameer, we got a new frontier, we were to be masters of Afghan foreign policy, we were to support the Ameer against foreign foes, and we were to have a British resident at Cabul. All this policy, Sir Stafford said, "was forced on us" (August 14, 1879). In three weeks the resident, Sir Louis Cavagnari, with the gallant Hamilton, had been massacred. Cabul was recaptured, the murderers were punished, but General Roberts was forced into the Sherpur cantonments, and Christmas came before he was relieved. In all this affair the unhappy Ameer deserved our regrets, the Russians, our disinterested congratulations; and as for the Government, it is easy to blame them, or commiserate with them, but hard to say what they should have done. It does seem as if, in these three troubles—the Bulgarian atrocities, the war with the Ameer, and the Zulu war—the Government was ill served abroad, and had its hand forced into directions not approved of by its judgment.

They were not more fortunate in that grave of men and of reputations, South Africa. In 1877 we had annexed the Transvaal, which "was drifting into anarchy, was bankrupt, and was about to be destroyed by native tribes."¹ According to Sir T. Shepstone, "most thinking men" were in favour of the annexation, but Sir Theophilus did not say that most Boers were. The annexation appears at least to have prevented Cetywayo from washing his spears, or trying to wash them, in the blood of Boers. It was in other blood that he performed this part of Zulu coronation ritual.² We annexed the Transvaal, its 40,000 white people, and its million of black people—unregarded dusky million—whom we took "for ever,"

¹ Cetywayo and his White Neighbours. H. Rider Haggard, p. 117.

² *Op. cit.*, 119, 120.

and deserted in a few years. Cetywayo declared that he viewed the annexation with pleasure, though he regretted the neglect of that ceremony with the spears. Then came a difficulty about the Boer and Zulu marches. We took the side of the Boers. Sir Bartle Frere came on the scene, and bade Cetywayo disband his army. He refused. We invaded Zululand, and every one knows what followed.

As to all these disasters, when Lord Hartington asked who is to be held responsible, Sir Stafford replied, "Her Majesty's Government" (March 31, 1879). "We do not cast the responsibility upon our agents." They stood between Sir Bartle Frere and the sentence of Parliament. The Government itself censured Sir Bartle Frere, but did not withdraw its confidence. He denied that Sir Bartle had throughout, in his negotiations, been deliberately working for a Zulu war. He gave a history of all that led to the Zulu war, and really this history seems a very strong condemnation of Sir Bartle's conduct, especially of his extraordinary ultimatum to the Zulus. The history is of most interest as expressing Sir Stafford's theory of the Transvaal annexation, as a measure taken in the cause of peace, and "to stop any future wars with the Zulus, and other native tribes." If the Government censured and dismissed Sir Bartle, what then? What was their next step to be? Where was a Liberal policy, except Mr Courtney's policy, "Abandon confederation, and withdraw from the Transvaal"? That, Sir Stafford thought, would, or might, involve our withdrawing from South Africa as an Imperial Power. The wish of the Government now was to break up the Zulu military system, while leaving them the power of protecting themselves against native tribes. But, one fancies, the Amaboona (the Boers) were the only "tribe" from whom they needed protection.

In all this miserable business it is easy to criticise. Perhaps a really powerful nation would have simply enlisted the Zulus as its gladiators, and held South Africa with them. As it chanced, we rescued the Boers from their assegais, only to "perish by the people we have made," only to ruin the finest natural soldiers in the

world, and to give the world a typical proof of our inability to discharge imperial tasks. The Zulus were hardly overthrown before the Boers, now safe on that side, began to show their teeth. But the Boers were left to be dealt with by Mr Gladstone's Government.

CHAPTER XV.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE AS A PARLIAMENTARY LEADER.

THE two previous chapters, reviewing Sir Stafford's conduct as Chancellor of the Exchequer and in foreign affairs, do not deal with his other work as leader of his party in the House of Commons, both before and after the Liberal victory of 1880. To that topic we now address ourselves.

Sir Stafford Northcote entered upon his duties as leader of the House of Commons on the 8th February 1877, when the Parliament of 1874 met for its fourth session. On the 6th July 1885, he took his seat in the House of Lords as Earl of Iddesleigh and Viscount St Cyres. For eight sessions and a half he led the Conservative party continuously in the Lower House.

Sir Stafford's political career has now been traced to its culmination. We may pause for a moment to ask by what steps he attained this elevation. In the first place, he had made some mark in public and official life, and had displayed considerable administrative power and skill in dealing with men before he entered Parliament. In Parliament, his position, when he first entered it, was not a common one, as he was both a Conservative and a Free-trader. No other distinguished man of those opinions ultimately failed to join the Liberal ranks. With the Peelites he shared that aptitude for public business, which was then far more valuable in the parliamentary career than it is at present. It was his powers as a man of business that, in the first case, made the reputation of

Peel, and, perhaps we may say, of Mr Gladstone. But Sir Stafford was what Mr Gladstone was not, a country gentleman. His combination of attributes as a man of affairs, and a man with what used to be valued as "a stake in the country," and in sympathy with the agricultural interest, made Sir Stafford particularly valuable as an ally to Mr Disraeli. The landed and titled party had for many years looked down upon and distrusted that ingenious leader, as a landless man, a Hebrew, a literary adventurer. The qualities of brilliance and wit which proved so taking to a large section of the public, were exactly those which our aristocracy distrusts, and associates with flightiness. Mr Disraeli had no serious pretensions to be a man of business, just as Sir Stafford never alarmed nor annoyed anybody by inopportune flights of fancy. Thus the two politicians were each the other's complement, and of this Mr Disraeli was very sensible. Sir Stafford could appreciate the real greatness of his chief, and Mr Disraeli gave Sir Stafford an excellent start in politics, an advantage which was never lost, and which was well repaid. Sir Stafford's personal character, his frankness, loyalty, and tact, with his wisdom and skill in finance, won very rapidly on the House of Commons, and made him liked and respected by all parties, while he was always welcome and a favourite in the country. With the exception of Lord Aberdeen and Mr Gladstone, Sir Stafford was the only Peelite who rose to one of the very highest positions in the State. To illustrate the closeness of his relations with Mr Disraeli, and the confidence reposed in him by that leader, we may here quote two or three of Mr Disraeli's letters, dated in different periods from 1860 till the year of Lord Beaconsfield's death.

GROSVENOR GATE, *Jan. 16, 1860.*

MY DEAR NORTHCOTE,—Since we left you we have experienced a great sorrow, as sudden as it was sad, which has shaken me to the centre, and quite incapacitated me for business. However, I can delay the exertion no longer, and indeed affairs are very critical—both foreign and domestic. Everywhere something

happens, and adds to the complications and difficulties of the situation. But I have neither time nor energy to write a despatch. When shall you be up? Lord Derby will be here mid-day on Saturday, and I shall have to see him directly. Shall you be in town before that, or when? as I should like to have a long and confidential "cause" with you on all heads, and, if it might be, before I saw him. Mrs D. unites with me in the kindest remembrances to your charming wife, and we embrace the children.—Yours sincerely, D.

10 DOWNING STREET, *Sept. 15, 1868.*

MY DEAR NORTHCOTE,—I must leave Afghanistan to yourself and the Governor-General; only just hinting that we must not forget the past, and take care that our relations with Shere Ali should be as little complicated as possible. . . . —Yours sincerely, D.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct. 12, 1874.*

MY DEAR CHANCELLOR,—In about a month our November Cabinets must commence. Previous to that, and as soon as convenient to yourself, I should like to be favoured with your views as to our situation generally, and with any suggestions as to our future course.

As I passed through town I saw the French Ambassador, a friend of forty years, and experienced in English politics. He said that internally you have not a single difficulty. I trust he was right. Nevertheless, we must consider the condition of Ireland, as the group of laws called the Coercion Acts are on the eve of expiration. We could not decide on this, however, until the last moment.

I believe that Mr Secy. X. (*sic*) is at work on a Dwelling Bill. This, if well done, with our engagements on other matters, would occupy the session. I hope you are well, and Lady Northcote, and all your hearth. I have myself suffered a great deal from the gout, but am now in good trim.—Always yours, D.

2 WHITEHALL GARDENS, *August 1, 1875.*

MY DEAR C. OF E.,—I had no idea of the hot debate there was to be, or I would have taken care to have saved you some trouble—not to have assisted you, for that you never need, and when away I never feel nervous when you are present.—Yours ever, D.

10 DOWNING STREET, *Aug. 3, 1875.*

MY DEAR NORTHCOTE,—I think your proposition monstrous. You are, and ever have been, my right hand, my most trusty

counsellor; and I look to your filling a higher post than that which you admirably discharge. . . .—Yours ever, D.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *July 4, 1880.*

MY DEAR N.,—You must not tax yourself to write to me, though no one's letters are more welcome. I should have written to you before this to say how much I approved and admired all you had done, but have been in the gout for the last week, and indite this with a gloved hand, which has only just escaped from a sling. I have little faith in the Whig defalcation on the Land Bill. It is not half enough. The Fenian members will compensate the Government by a number equal to the defection. I think the Bill the worst thing that has happened in my time—now a long experience. There is no ruin to which it may not lead—a bill of Beelzebub.

I hope you are continuing well, and am glad to see your son active. With my kind remembrances to Lady Northcote.—Yours, B.

19 CURZON STREET, W., *March 15, 1881.*

MY DEAR N.,—I most heartily congratulate you on your triumph. The Capitol was never ascended with more deserved glory.

I place your letter, most picturesque and lifelike, in my archives.—Yours sincerely, BEACONSFIELD.

This letter was an answer to one from Sir Stafford, who had written to tell him of a successful check he had just administered to the Government. The Government had tried to get some votes taken under Rules of Urgency (which were a sort of precursory system to the *clôture*), and the Conservatives had prevented this being done. The letter is only interesting as the last ever received from Lord Beaconsfield. It was written only about five weeks before his death.

It must be remarked that the circumstances in which Sir Stafford assumed the leadership were inauspicious. When he came to the front, in 1877, the Parliament elected in 1874 had passed its prime. The Conservative enthusiasm had abated; in the bracing air of opposition the Liberals had won new strength. The last years of a Parliament are often but a sorry autumn after a pro-

ming spring; the almost inevitable reaction of modern popular government creates a world of difficulties. How bad the times were, how harassed and unfortunate at home and abroad, we have already seen. Clouds were sweeping up from every quarter. However, Sir Stafford had, as Lord Beaconsfield told Mr Montagu Corry, "the largest parliamentary knowledge of any man he had met in his career." He did not grumble about his bad luck, and he devoted himself energetically to his duties. He was not primarily responsible for the foreign policy, concerning which his private ideas, and his reasons for following the path chosen by his leader, have already been explained. His character happily qualified him to restrain and retain the members of his party, at a time when a by no means ignoble sentiment was pressing for some vague coercion of Turkey, which, in Sir Stafford's opinion, would have meant, not peace and happiness, but more war and more misery. Any one in doubt on this most difficult question could comfort himself by Sir Stafford's example, and by the certainty that he could not be found on the side of dishonour or of oppression. What would have occurred, if he had been a different kind of man, or if he had been converted to Mr Gladstone's opinions, whether good or evil would have come of it for England, for the East, and for the world, it were vain to discuss. Like all human arrangements, the Treaty of Berlin left a good deal to be desired; but it did, at all events, close for the time a terrible page in history, and the benefit to Bulgaria was immense. With those results Sir Stafford's leadership had much to do. Nobody could, or did, pretend to doubt that he was struggling for the most righteous end to which circumstances could be adjusted. So, too, in the Afghan and Zulu wars, his party were much united and strengthened by confidence in him, and in his well-known character for rectitude.

The question of obstruction in Parliament, conduct degrading to that House for which Sir Stafford cherished so much affection and respect, may be briefly dealt with. No subject could have been more distasteful to him than the treatment of proceedings which began by abusing the

forms of the House, and which, it was thought, should be met by altering those venerable forms. The House was being degraded, and he feared that the *clôture* would make the degradation permanent, without removing the evil at which it was aimed. He would gladly have trusted to the good sense of the House and of the country in the long-run. The danger, he believed, was one which would only occur at intervals, and which English intelligence would not permit for long to exist. He spoke of the *clôture* as he might have spoken of the knout. On this topic he never altered his mind. But something had to be done to meet the need of the moment, and on the 24th of February 1879, Sir Stafford Northcote carried, after a protracted debate, the now familiar rule, then only applied to Monday, that there should be no preliminary debate on Mondays and Thursdays upon going into Committee of Supply unless the Army, Navy, or Civil Service Estimates are first taken, and then only on some question connected with the votes to be proposed. Again, on the 28th of February 1880, a few weeks before Parliament was dissolved, a very long and elaborate proviso was adopted, according to which a member could be suspended by the House, after being named from the chair, without being heard in his own defence. This rule was made a standing order, and still, in an altered form, survives.

In 1880 the Conservative Government was defeated and turned out of office. How Sir Stafford himself took the defeat is elsewhere narrated. He was now leader of the Opposition, and had to attack instead of defending, which was a duty perhaps less suited to his genius. For the first year, till Lord Beaconsfield's death, he led under his old chief; afterwards the Conservatives had a dual leadership, that of Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords and of Sir Stafford in the Commons, an arrangement which lasted till Mr Gladstone's defeat in 1885. His main functions were criticism of the foreign and of the Irish policy of the Government: he had also to lead in the debates on the *clôture*, and on the affair of Mr Bradlaugh. In another place (Chapter XVII.) we deal with his criticisms of the Government's policy.

He preferred, in opposition, the policy of Fabius to that of Minutius, and in this he differed from what was then known as the Fourth Party, consisting, with more or less cohesion, of Mr Arthur Balfour, Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir John Gorst, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. They wished to act as if an Opposition should be always on the offensive, regardless of uncounted defeats. Sir Stafford thought it undesirable to be constantly parading forces which were certain to be outnumbered. This seemed to him waste of time, and not of advantage in any sense to the party which attempted such tactics. Hence arose differences of opinion within the party, on which it is now unnecessary to dwell.

Sir Stafford's own account of his conduct with regard to Mr Bradlaugh will be found in his diary in the following chapter, and it is needless to anticipate it, and to tell again a story best narrated by one of the principal actors. The subject was one by no means congenial to Sir Stafford's temperament, though he displayed all the tact necessary in the unprecedented and difficult circumstances.

Sir Stafford had many qualifications for a leader. He never missed the point of an argument, the most frequent and most mischievous of all fallacies. If he was replying at the end of a debate, he "took all their points in his shield." His courage and coolness never forsook him; his temper was perfect, and his dignity was never ruffled. He had humour, and good humour, the qualities which Fielding prayed the Muse to give him, and which are at least as desirable for a politician as for an author. But he had no love of parliamentary waggery for its own sake, and remarked that the speakers who moved most laughter were seldom the most respected. Yet he would rather banter an opponent than denounce. Invective was not dear to him, and he never paraded a virtuous indignation.

Perhaps the two characteristics that were especially his own were his simplicity and his graciousness. A distinguished public servant wrote of him after his death, with perfect truth, that his graciousness concealed his greatness, and his simplicity tended to produce the same effect. For exaggeration of all kinds he entertained a

profound contempt, and this habit of mind led him generally to make the least of things, and particularly of his own work. His simplicity also accounts for his utter indifference to authority for the sake of authority. To many minds it is a pleasure to issue commands, and to see those commands obeyed : it seems a satisfactory proof of power. But the exercise of authority gave Sir Stafford Northcote no pleasure at all.

Two of his virtues were, perhaps, rather drawbacks in the House of Commons. He had nothing of the political gladiator, and he had a mind so detached that he could see a question, as it were in cold blood, while others were still in a state of effervescence. They might, and probably would, come to look at the matter with his eyes ; his mind gave the verdict of the future while men were aflame with the present. And he did not possess, he probably disdained, the rhetorical trick of "battering one's self into a passion" of anger, as Burns admits that he frequently battered himself into a passion of love. He saw what was right and wise, and he endeavoured to follow it, though with no impracticable contempt of the possible. He would rather that his opponents should succeed in a rightful course than that his own side should win a temporary triumph. We are describing the Just Man in politics, but that was the *rôle* of Sir Stafford in the parliamentary arena. We cannot say *justissimus unus*, nor claim for him a lonely eminence, but the position is certainly not usually thronged by men of this temper.

As a speaker he was hardly eloquent, perhaps it were more fair to say that he was not rhetorical. If argument could not convince, so be it : he did not attempt nor desire to sway opinion by noise, by bluster, nor by the poetry of parliamentary prose. He was assuredly no Demosthenes ; but, if he lacked the talent, he also was free from the sophistries of those who draw men captive by the ears. In all this Sir Stafford was English of the old school. He did not choose to treat debate as a literary art : he said his straightforward say, he flashed in an occasional thrust of kindly humour, but he never dealt in perorations. His thoughts flowed forth freely, which is the first mean-

ing of eloquence, and with perfect lucidity. It was not necessary to comment on and pore over his speeches to get a certain meaning out of them, as if they had been Delphic hexameters, misty and musical, and tampering with a double sense. He did not "hedge," he did not use words so as to leave himself loopholes of retreat. The audience knew what he was driving at, and there is almost a tacit scorn of flummery and fine talk in the plainness of his periods. The great orators have spoken in a very different style, and orators who were not great have tried to imitate them. It is not meant that Sir Stafford despised the rhetorical art; but he very much preferred the logical. Much time would be saved, clearer views of affairs would be attained, if there were, in fact, no such thing as artistic rhetoric. All the arts exist to give pleasure, rhetoric like the others, and in giving pleasure it is justified, but not always in its consequences. To conclude, Sir Stafford had neither the skill nor the desire to deal in "glamour," which many critics think a fine thing. To see the world as Grettir saw it, after he beheld the eyes of the Glam, the vampire, glittering in the moonlight as he died the second death, is not really a desirable result of public speaking. But that is the origin apparently of the old word, and that is the result of the eloquence which "casts the glamour o'er us." Preserve us from "Glam's sight," and let us, by all means, endeavour to see things as they are. "Glamour," as the glossaries say, is "magical delusion"¹:

"Can make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All is delusion, naught is truth."²

Sir Stafford's less glittering skill was to make a castle

¹ The derivation of "glamour" from "gramarye" is perhaps more scientific, if less picturesque.

² The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

in the political air seem a ruined cabin, thriftless, roofless, not to be tenanted.

Sir Stafford Northcote once gracefully alluded to the ultimate judgment that he expected to be formed as to his career. In the spring of 1886, an extraordinary honour was paid him, and he was presented by members of both parties in the House of Commons with a testimonial in token of their affection and esteem. The testimonial took the form of plate, and on the various pieces were engraved the heads of some of the principal statesmen with whom Sir Stafford had been connected. Upon one of the candelabra was impressed his own likeness between those of Lord Beaconsfield and Mr Gladstone. In returning thanks for the presentation, Sir Stafford Northcote remarked upon this circumstance, and observed: "If I feel like the mortal horse who ran third in the chariot of Achilles with the two immortal steeds—if I feel that I am unworthy to be placed among such distinguished men, yet I cannot help being proud, when I remember that it was in such company that I played my part in the House of Commons to the best of my ability."

Perhaps Sir Stafford himself hardly realised the esteem in which he was held, though he was able to record in his diary that, as he entered the House of Commons for the last time, it was difficult to say on which side the cheering was more hearty or more general. His real strength in Parliament was based on the respect and affection of his countrymen. Men could trust him. In the battle of life men fight for various motives—

"The aspiring noble bled for fame,
The patriot for his country's claim,
This knight his youthful strength to prove,
And that to win his lady's love,
Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood."

He, like Sarpedon, ventured himself in the strife that gives renown, for honour, for duty, for the great name of England.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR STAFFORD'S DIARY OF 1880.

THE defeat of the Conservatives in 1880 left Sir Stafford leisure enough for the keeping of a diary, which, with some interruptions, he continued till his death. The story of the latest years of his life may be somewhat briefly condensed by the aid of these memoirs, but much that is most interesting is inevitably suppressed.

The diary was begun on April 20, 1880, at Elmley House, Wimbledon, lent to Sir Stafford by Lord Beauchamp. It records "our last council at Windsor," and, on April 12, "our last Cabinet."

DIARY.

Lord B. reckons the Whigs in the new House at 237, and the Conservatives at 240. There are, I think, 62 Home Rulers (of various shades), so there would remain 113 extreme or unclassified Radicals. Some disintegration may soon be expected in the majority, but we have first to see what the Ministry is like.

Our great defeat seems due to—

1. Want of suitable organisation, and some over-confidence and apathy.
2. The bad times, and a desire of change in hopes of better luck.
3. The effects of the unscrupulous assertions of our opponents.
4. The very large expenditure of money by them. Our chief losses were: A. Egerton, Lowther, Salt, Raikes, and some of our county members.

There has been some doubt whether we ought not to meet Parliament as a Ministry, and wait for a vote of want of confidence before resigning. There are other reasons, particularly in respect of Indian affairs, which make the continuance of a practically condemned Admin-

istration undesirable and even dangerous. It is not safe to leave it uncertain what policy is to be pursued in Afghanistan or in the Transvaal.

April 26.—The names of the new Government, so far as they are yet given, do not seem to give much satisfaction. The Radicals are much annoyed. Forster should do well in Ireland, though his manners are rough. The Irish remember his mission in the time of the great famine, when he came to distribute the contributions of the Society of Friends; and they will also take the appointment of so leading a politician to the Chief Secretaryship as a compliment. I think it is likely enough that a Conservative cave may be formed on the Liberal side, with perhaps Goschen as its centre, and that if we manage our opposition discreetly, we may often join hands with them, and perhaps ultimately bring some of them to take part in a Conservative Cabinet. At the present moment one thinks of such things only in the spirit in which the Roman purchaser bid for the fields occupied by the Carthaginian army. Still, it is necessary to lay our foundations properly.

May 1.—At the Royal Academy dinner to-night, Gladstone said that if he had any strength left for his great task, it was due to the kindness with which his distinguished friends (Granville and Hartington) had enabled him to enjoy comparative repose during the last five years; and now, having borne the burden and heat of the day, they had ceded to him the honour which they might justly have claimed for themselves! I wonder how they liked his partition of the oyster. Hartington, later in the evening, said to me, "I congratulate you on having less work before you; and I rather congratulate myself on getting out of the hardest part of my own." I presume he does not mean to take much part in the work of the House now. It is doubtful whether there is really much love lost between the "three great statesmen," notwithstanding the prayer of the Nonconformist minister that they might "all hang together." "Amen," said a voice in the congregation. "I mean," said the minister,

"that they may hang together in accord and concord."
"It doesn't matter what sort of a cord it is," replied the voice. The news of the day is, that a change has taken place in the proprietorship of the 'Pall Mall Gazette.'

I gave Smith a paper on the subject of the party organisation, and Barrington lent me some good remarks on the defects of our party organisation in Scotland. There is a great deal to be done. It is my notion that we ought to have a small committee of parliamentary leaders, who should keep themselves in constant communication with the managers of the Central Association. Much might be done, and many mistakes avoided, if we were better informed as to the feelings of the party throughout the country. The writer of the paper points out very well the mischief resulting from the want of communication between the Conservative landowners in Scotland and their general unacquaintance with the feelings of their tenantry. He also gives an interesting account of the ecclesiastical parties, and complains of the mistakes made by us in passing the Church Patronage Act. He attributes much of the recent Liberal success to the efforts of Dr Rainy, Principal of the college through which the Free Church clergy have passed for now more than twenty-five years. The Episcopalian landowners stand apart from, and know little of the opinions of, the ecclesiastical bodies. The Free Church will not unite with Established, because they would lose the buildings they have erected throughout the country, which "would become the property of the proprietors on whose lands they stand." (Is this so?) The U.P., who seceded in the last century, have always been strongly political, and opposed to the connection of Church and State. The leaders of the Free Church, in 1843, though seceding on the Veto and Patronage questions, were not opposed to that connection; but their successors (and notably Dr Rainy) have taken a more political line, and the majority became keen for union with the U.P. This has been resisted by the religious minority of the Free Church; and the minority have

carried the day, because in case of a split they would have remained the representatives of the true Free Church, and would have retained all its buildings and property. The majority have, however, carried a plan constituting ministers of the two Churches (Free Kirk and U.P.) reciprocally eligible for charges in the two denominations; and the by far larger section of the Free Kirk are now in compact union with the Presbyterian Nonconformists of Scotland and England, from whom they had previously been separated by their refusal of Voluntaryism. On the other hand, the minority of the Free Kirk have not coalesced to the same degree with the Establishment, partly because of the question of retention of their special property, and partly from other reasons (such as the liability of feuars to contribute to the buildings of Established Churches); while the abolition of Patronage has rather alienated the Free Kirk, who used to gain by secessions of discontented minorities in individual cases, and has not done much to conciliate the Established Church, which was contented with the previous state. The Free Kirk now see in the Establishment a body of men who have the same privileges as themselves, so far as patronage goes, and have in addition the endowments from which they themselves are excluded. The serious thing politically is, that the Radicals have a close union, and a most able leader (Dr Rainy), while the Establishment Conservatives have "no leader, no cohesion, no defensive organisation."

May 3.—Took my seat. Question as to Bradlaugh's right to make an affirmation instead of an oath to be referred to a committee. It seems strange to require an oath from a Christian, and to dispense with it from an atheist. Would it not be better to do away with the members' oath altogether, and make the affirmation general?

May 8.—Left Wimbledon, and came down to Pynes. The papers are full of Fawcett's speech at Hackney, in which he charges us with having suppressed the bad reports as to the cost of the Afghan war until after the elections. This is of course untrue; but there has been

gross laxity somewhere, and the whole system of Indian accounts must be overhauled.

May 10.—Received news of Harcourt's defeat at Oxford. It is important as a proof of the temporary and local character of the causes which led to our great defeat. Harcourt's success at the general election was mainly due to the over-confidence and consequent supineness of Hall's friends, who thought their man so safe that some did not trouble themselves to go to the poll, while others split their votes to bring in Harcourt rather than Chitty.

May 11.—We have had two Ministerial apologies. Fawcett has been compelled to withdraw his charge of the concealment of the Indian deficit, but has done so very ungraciously. Gladstone, on the other hand, has made a most abject and undignified apology to Count Karolyi for his abuse of Austria in his Mid-Lothian speeches.

Our friends in the House of Commons continue hammering at the Bradlaugh Committee, contending that no such business as the appointment of a committee ought to be done till after the Queen's Speech. They are wrong. The House must be constituted, and for that purpose members must be sworn. If in the process of swearing them a difficulty should arise which the Speaker declines to solve, and which he remits to the House, as he has done in this case, it is clearly competent to the House either to resolve it at once by a direct vote, or to refer it to a committee. We shall not be bound by the committee's report, and shall exercise our own judgment upon it when it is made.

May 19.—Auspicious news this morning! We have won two more seats. Mark Stewart has beaten the Lord Advocate in the Wigtown Burghs, and Mr Crompton Roberts has carried Sandwich (on Hugessen's becoming a peer) by a majority of about 440 against Sir Julian Goldsmid. The Home Secretary and Lord Advocate are now both without seats. The wildest rumours are-afloat as to the efforts being made to find an opening for the former. We shall see. The party meeting

held at Bridgewater House. About 450 were present, including not only members of both Houses of the present Parliament, but also members of the late House who have lost their seats. There was an excellent and cheerful tone: Lord B. spoke for an hour and three-quarters reminding the party of former defeats, and of the great rallying power it has shown in the worst times.

May 20.—Parliament met for business. Grey moved Address in remarkably good speech, modest and in good taste, but independent in tone; Mason, the seconder, seems able, but very Radical. I followed them at once, notwithstanding a notice of amendment having been given by the Irish, and ran briefly over the topics of the Speech; saying that we should support in Opposition the same policy which we had promoted when in office; that we were glad to see that the general language of the Queen's Speech was in accordance with that policy, and with the recognition of established facts; but that we wanted fuller explanations, especially with regard to the meaning and character of Goschen's mission. Gladstone followed, and answered my speech, but did not throw much real light on the proposed policy in Turkey. Some passages of his speech were significant, and seemed to point to the abandonment or revision of the Anglo-Turkish Convention. He spoke of the false impressions which it was necessary to remove from the mind of Turkey—one, that England had some such separate and overpowering interest in the maintenance of that empire, that her support might be counted on under any circumstances whatever; the other, that England was aiming at acquiring for herself a direct share in the government of Asiatic Turkey, and this latter delusion was perhaps fostered by the provisions of the Anglo-Turkish Convention. From what I hear, Léon Say is very much dissatisfied with the political prospect. He thinks proposals will be made to France which she will accept; amongst other things, that she will be invited to occupy Syria. He foretells the "joint occupation" of Constantinople by January or February. — spoke to me most friendly in the lobby, and assured me that our

foreign policy had done us no harm in the northern towns. Our defeat was mainly due to the distress and misrepresentations. We must notice that there had never been an election in which we had lost so many seats by such small majorities. He did not think the Government would last long. — also spoke to me after Gladstone's speech, which he did not like. He commented on his saying nothing about Roumania and the Arab Tabia difficulty. He said, "You are in a strong position in the country: I have been down to Sandwich to help my friends, and I could not but see unmistakable signs of opinion in your favour. When an election like that is carried by 400 or 500 votes, it means something."

Went on to the House of Commons, where the Bradlaugh case was resumed. The Government were anxious to slur matters over by allowing him to take the oath without remark; but Wolff prevented this by raising his objection the moment the Clerk tendered the book. Dillwyn rose to order, but the Speaker ruled in Wolff's favour. Wolff made his case very fairly, but rather unwisely imported quotations from some of Bradlaugh's writings against the Royal Family, which did not really help his argument, and gave a too heated turn to the discussion. Gladstone then moved an amendment, which the Government had evidently prepared in anticipation of, and as a bar to, Wolff's motion, proposing to refer to a committee the question whether the House has a right to interfere with a member's taking his seat, if he is willing to take the prescribed oath. This form of reference obviously ignores the special circumstances and real point of the case, which is in short this, that a man offering to take an oath, and at the same time declaring that he regards it as an empty form, not binding on his conscience, does not really offer to take it at all. Gibson, our late Attorney-General for Ireland, made an admirable speech, to which the reports hardly do justice. When he took up the Testament and put the imaginary case of a man proposing to swear upon it, but at the same time saying, "I don't believe the first words, and I don't believe the last words

of the book, nor any of its contents," he produced a great effect. The discussion ran on for some time, and was then adjourned till Monday, that we might see and consider the terms of the proposed reference.

The debate on the report of the Address then came on. Arthur Balfour raised some points as to the Goschen mission, and the intentions of the Government respecting the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Gladstone denied any instruction having been given for its abrogation. There were some unpleasant attacks made on the Government from their own side, especially a very bitter complaint by Leonard Courtney of their retaining Frere as Governor of the Cape. They were, he said, doing the very thing which they had been going up and down the country and abusing us for doing. The Radicals feel this very keenly.

May 22.— —, whom I met in the Row, spoke very angrily about the conduct of the Government in the Frere case. I told him that he and his friends were like Falstaff and Pistol when they found that Henry V. threw over the associates of Prince Hal. He admitted the justice of the comparison.

May 24.—At Lady Mary Cecil's wedding in the morning. Afterwards walked down to Carlton Terrace with Sandon. We agreed to stand firm for Wolff's motion. It came on, and the debate was much in our favour. Randolph Churchill spoke very well and dexterously; Hardinge Giffard was excellent; Herschell weak and embarrassed; Watkin Williams practically with us on the main point, which is, that repeating the form of an oath, with a protest from the person who does so that he regards it as an idle and meaningless form, is not "taking an oath" within the meaning of the statute. The Government only got a majority of seventy-five in this their first struggle; and now we have got to see what the Committee will do. The consumption of leeks by the Government goes on merrily. To-night Cowen put a question to Childers as to whether they intended to give effect to the resolution which Hartington moved last year,

and abolish corporal punishment in the army. Childers read an elaborate answer, amid roars of laughter from our side, that they fully accepted the spirit of Hartington's motion; but that they had to consider how it could be carried out, and what punishment could be substituted. He observed that flogging was now only used when an army was in the field, and that there might be "critical moments," &c., &c. In short, the matter could not be dealt with this year! Later in the evening, on a motion of Fowler's, Gladstone made an elaborate apology for not recalling Sir Bartle Frere, arguing that it was necessary to keep him at the Cape to carry confederation. I commended his policy, which was exactly our own, and only expressed a humble wish that he had thought of it a little sooner. — said to Smith afterwards, "Did you ever follow in the tracks of a big animal through the snow, putting down your feet in his footprints? That's what the Government are doing with your measures." Terms of reference to Bradlaugh Committee agreed upon. Gladstone wants to nominate the late Committee, but I demanded some addition at all events, as Holker was our only representative, while they had Bright and their two law officers. We must have Cross and Gibson put on.

May 26.—Dined at Nobody's. My first election to the Club. Sat between Walpole and the Bishop of Hereford.

May 28.—Nomination of the Bradlaugh Committee. Gladstone's pretension to nominate on the principle of proportioning the numbers on the Committee to the strength of parties in the House. I protested at once against this assumption. If he tries to give effect to it, I must advise our friends to decline to serve. We are rather in trouble on account of Dyke's knocking up. He will not be able to take any more work as Whip this session. It is very difficult to make a new arrangement.

June 3.—There has been a good deal of difficulty upon the question of the nomination of Committees. The contention of the Government is, that the proportions to be

allotted to different sections of the House in the arrangement of a committee should be somewhat the same as the proportions in which our parliamentary strength is now divided; and that a committee of twenty-three should be composed of twelve Ministerialists, nine Conservatives, and two Home Rulers. As the Home Rulers are commonly much more disposed to join the Government than the Opposition, this would usually put us in a minority of nine against fourteen. This is not at all in accordance with the practice of giving the Government a majority of one upon all the Committees, a practice which has been found very convenient hitherto. If it were not for the "Third party," our course would be clear; we should recommend our friends to refuse to serve upon Committees unless they were struck according to the old principle. But there is no doubt a real difficulty to be encountered. The Government may fairly refuse to reckon the Home Rulers as part of their forces, and might claim to nominate a majority out of the body to whom the Ministerialist Whip is sent. We may do the same. Then the Home Rulers would have no representatives on the Committee proposed by the two Whips. They would not stand this, and there would be a fight in the House, which would end in one of these ways—either one or two Irish members would be added to the Committee, or they would be substituted for one or two of the members proposed by the Whips. In the latter case, we should probably arrive at the solution proposed by the Government, and the result would be the crushing of the Conservative minority; because it may be assumed that the Government, having a majority in the House, would support their own nominees on the Committee, and would give the Third party their seats at the expense of the nominees of the minority. If the other course—that of adding two members to represent the Third party—were adopted, then the Third party would have the balance in their hands, and would be masters of the situation. The object of the Government seems to be to reduce the Conservative Opposition to the level of a

"sect," more numerous than the sect of the Home Rulers, but having no more rights than they. The Government are to hold the position of an establishment. We agreed last night, after a protest, to the appointment of the Merchant Shipping Commission on the new principle; but we reserve our right to fight the battle again. The speeches about Cyprus last night were suggestive and amusing. The quiet way in which both Dilke and Gladstone ignored all their old abuse of the island, and their complete acceptance of it as almost a British possession, to be administered through the Colonial Office, was highly edifying.

June 4.—The proceedings on the Employers Liability Bill last night were highly edifying. The Government have plunged into a thorny question without much consideration; and, as they naively tell us, have taken up the most promising (as they thought) of the various bills presented last session, and ask the House to adopt its principle, explaining that by its "principle" they simply mean that the law requires alteration. They then propose to remodel it in accordance with all the hints and suggestions they may pick up in debate. Many of their supporters are furious with them, and the employers of labour throughout the country are much alarmed. The second reading we all allowed to pass last night, but the real fight is to come. Gladstone's reply to my remarks on the situation was curious. He had never said we were incompetent for domestic legislation; on the contrary, I must be well aware that he thought me highly competent for it, and that his complaint was that we had allowed the time of the House to be taken up with other matters, which prevented our giving the necessary time to domestic affairs.

R. Grosvenor has agreed to form the Metropolis Water Committee on the principle of eight Liberals, eight Conservatives, and a member chosen by the Home Rulers. This arrangement is to be "without prejudice." It is quite satisfactory for the present.

I did not stay late at the House last night, and there-

fore missed a good deal of fun. The Opium debate was noteworthy, and Hartington caught it pretty heavily from "moral" friends on his own side. Gladstone had been dining out to meet the authoress of 'Sister Dora' (Miss Lonsdale, who was very much alarmed by the rapidity and variety of his questions), and only came back in time to express his opinion that the House was too much influenced by feeling, and too little by judgment! It must be as good as a play to hear such sentiments from such a quarter. After this came the question of O'Connor Power's Land Bill, which is to give tenants "compensation for disturbance," when they are evicted for non-payment of rent. The Irish strongly pressed the Government to give them a day, which Gladstone had refused earlier in the evening; but it seems likely that they will have to give way. Whenever we come to a review of Gladstone's inconsistencies, we shall have to note (1) his apology to Karolyi, which is now disguised by his admirers as a virtual surrender of Austria; (2) his retention of Frere, which is now described as a virtual dismissal of that great man; (3) his retention of Cyprus, which is to be made more English than at present.

June 20.—It is almost impossible to keep up a journal when one is in the thick of the session, with all manner of questions to look up, a great many people to see, no books, papers, or secretaries at hand, and living at this distance from the House and the clubs. I hope to do better next year, when we have our house in St James's Place; meanwhile we are keeping up our spirits pretty well. The number of blunders which the Government have already committed is almost incredible, and there is a promise of a good addition to their difficulties. Harcourt's blundering, Gladstone's impetuosity, and Forster's vacillations have done much to disenchant the world, and it does not seem as if they had anything in store for us that will make up for the disappointment they have caused, and the alarm they have occasioned among their own friends.

It is possible that the Bill (Hares and Rabbits) may

not come on for a long time. When it does, I think I must speak early, declaring myself personally ready to vote for one of the Whig amendments, and enlarging on the importance of upholding the doctrine of free contract, in view especially of the formidable invasions of the rights of property with which we are threatened in other particulars—as, *e.g.*, in the matter of rent; but I must make comparatively light of the probable division on the second reading, as we shall have the opportunity of amending the bill in Committee, and I shall say that we may regard the second reading in the light in which Gladstone (or Dodson) asked us to regard the second reading of their Employers Liability Bill—merely as an assumption that something ought to be done.

The course of the Government with regard to O'Connor Power's bill has been thoroughly discreditable to them. They began by refusing to give him a day for its discussion. Then, being pressed, they said they would think about doing so. Then they named a day, but gave no intimation as to their views as to the merits of the bill itself. Then, being pressed, they said they should oppose the bill; but that they would introduce into the Relief of Distress Bill a clause which should do pretty much what O'Connor Power proposes to do, but only for a limited time, within limited area, and at the discretion of the County Court Judges. Then, having given notice of this clause before the second reading of the Relief of Distress Bill, they propose to pass the second reading, but pretend that they can exclude discussion of the new clause at that stage, because it is not yet in the bill. The Speaker having ruled that they are wrong in this pretension, and that by placing so important a clause on the paper they have opened its principle to discussion, and Chaplin having moved that the debate on the second reading be adjourned, in order that the House may have time to consider this very important proposal, they again change front, and withdraw the clause, promising to make a new bill of it. The result was that (the House having agreed to the second reading on Thursday), when the

Committee was called on Friday morning, Parnell moved the adjournment of the debate on the precisely converse ground from that taken by Chaplin the day before—viz., the change caused by the Government not proceeding with their proposed new clause. Gladstone, to get out of the momentary difficulty, said he would agree to the adjournment, and go to other business; but the Irish then started an irregular conversation, which lasted about four hours, and stopped everything else. At length the English members began to complain of the waste of time, on which the Irish suggested that the best way of saving time would be to refer the bill to a Select Committee consisting of all the Irish members. This proposal of course came to nothing, but it shows what is likely to be tried hereafter. The Relief Bill now stands over for the present, but O'Connor Power's bill comes on for discussion on Tuesday. The whole tone of the Irish speeches on the Relief Bill is ominous. They insist on representing the advances as being made for the benefits of the landlords; and there is an obvious determination to depreciate the landlord's rights, and the value of the land, which I fear the Government will rather favour than repress. The Challemel-Lacour business has been an unpleasant one.

June 21, 22, 23.—Monday and Tuesday nights occupied by the discussion on the Bradlaugh case. Labouchere having given notice that he would move, as soon as the Report of the Second Committee was received, that Mr Bradlaugh should be allowed to affirm, we decided on an amendment, which we placed in Giffard's hands, declaring, with reference to the Reports of the two Committees, that he ought not to be allowed either to affirm or to take the oath. The Government seemed much to dislike their position, and looked as if they wished to leave the discussion as much as possible to the House, till towards the end of the evening, when Bright made one of his characteristic speeches, vehement, intolerant, and at times so offensive that I was very near rising to call him to order. The debate would probably have

been adjourned in any case, but this speech made it absolutely necessary. On Tuesday, Gladstone spoke early, and evidently under great anxiety. His speech, especially in its earlier part, was a very fine one, and produced a considerable impression. Towards the end, however, he refined far too much, and seemed a little to lose his hold of his audience. Gibson followed him with a very able and telling reply; but unfortunately the House had greatly emptied for dinner when Gladstone sat down. It is a favourite habit of his to speak into the dinner hour, so that his opponent must speak either to empty benches or forego the advantage of replying on the instant. The division took place at nearly 12.30. We had a majority of forty-five—a result wholly unexpected on our side, the more sanguine having only hoped for a close run, and being prepared to renew the fight by moving the previous question, and adjourning the debate on it. The excitement when the numbers were given was greater than I ever remember. There was shouting, cheering, clapping of hands, and other demonstrations, both louder and longer than any I have heard in my parliamentary life.

This morning (Wednesday) we have had a new act in the drama. Immediately after prayers Mr Bradlaugh came in, and proposed to take the oath. The Speaker thereupon read the resolution adopted last night, and added that he must retire in order that the House should consider the application, which he did. Labouchere then moved that he be heard, and Walpole added the words "At the bar of the House," saying that was the precedent in O'Connell's case. Gladstone meanwhile sent R. Grosvenor round to ask what I meant to do. I replied by asking what the Government meant to do. It was a critical moment, for some of our men were in a state of high excitement, and it was difficult to keep them quiet. It might well have happened that some one would rise and object to hearing Mr Bradlaugh; and, had a debate arisen, it was difficult to say what might have been its results. Gladstone's and my own mutual caution not to

give the other a chance had the effect of keeping the House comparatively quiet for the moment, and the Speaker put the question, and it was agreed to. Bradlaugh accordingly made his speech, and a very clever one it was, and well delivered, with a good deal of dramatic effect. With much difficulty we kept our men from interrupting. When he had finished and had withdrawn there was a pause, and the Speaker asked whether the House had any instructions for him. Gladstone sat silent, and, after a moment of suspense, I thought it necessary to take the initiative myself, observing that I supposed Gladstone abstained from doing so on the ground that he did not feel himself responsible for the situation which had arisen from the proceedings of last night, which he had opposed. I said I saw nothing for the House to do, as Bradlaugh's speech did not seem to have introduced any new element into the case. Gladstone concurred with me, saying that he thought it better to leave the details of the proceedings consequent on last night's resolution to be suggested by those who were responsible for the resolution itself. A motion was made by Mr Labouchere for rescinding the resolution of last night; but it was obviously unfair to take such a step without notice, and on Gladstone's commendation he withdrew it. I had previously challenged the regularity of making such a motion without notice; but the Speaker had ruled that, though ordinary resolutions ought not to be rescinded except upon notice duly given, this restriction did not apply to cases of "privilege." There seems to be the same distinction between the rules for "privilege" and those for ordinary proceedings that there is between the rules for playing trumps and those for playing common cards. When Labouchere had withdrawn his resolution, the Speaker called in Mr Bradlaugh, and informed him that the House persisted in ordering him to withdraw. Upon this he stated that he must respectfully refuse to withdraw, holding that the House had no legal power to order him to do so before he had taken the oath. The Speaker then informed the House that he required its authority to compel Mr Bradlaugh to obey its

directions. Gladstone still remaining silent, I made the necessary motion, which being accepted, the Speaker ordered the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove Mr Bradlaugh. Captain Gosset advanced, and for a moment there was an idea that Bradlaugh would resist him, in which case the physical force would not have been on the side of the constituted authority. However, nothing unseemly took place, and Mr Bradlaugh allowed himself to be conducted below the bar, but immediately returned, and on being removed again, returned again, and again came to the table. The Speaker then appealed to the House for directions as to the steps which should be taken to vindicate its authority. There were loud cries for "Gladstone," but he did not rise, and I therefore moved that Mr Bradlaugh be committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms for his contempt of the House. Gladstone concurred with me that this was the only course we could take. Leonard Courtney wished to insert words showing that Bradlaugh resisted the authority of the House, because he disputed the legality of its proceedings; but the Attorney-General held this to be an unnecessary and inconvenient addition, and the motion was not made. The Irish moved the adjournment but were defeated; and ultimately Mr Bradlaugh was committed. I don't see how we could have avoided the difficulty in which we are placed; but undoubtedly it is a rather serious one. The Government have done nothing to help the House out of it, and must suffer in their prestige in consequence.

June 24.—Meeting at Ridley's. Lord Beaconsfield, Cranbrook, Cross, Smith, John Manners, Sandon, Beach, Holker, Gibson, and Ridley. Talked over the situation, and decided that I should move for Bradlaugh's discharge, first, however, putting a question to Gladstone as to his intentions. I wrote a note to Gladstone, telling him that I meant to ask a question, to which he replied that he had been so busy with the details of his Budget that he had not had time to consider what he should do, and that he must therefore ask me to give notice of my question. I answered that I must persevere in putting it, and that,

if he did not purpose to make any motion himself, I should take on me the responsibility of doing so. I put the question accordingly, and received from him a very curt answer, that he had not yet consulted with his colleagues on the subject. I thereupon proposed my resolution, saying that I had only moved the committal the day before in order to assert the authority of the House, which Bradlaugh had disputed, and to enforce order, which was being violated by his proceedings. Labouchere declared that Bradlaugh would, if released, immediately present himself in the House again. The motion was, however, adopted with very little discussion; and though Harcourt and one or two others tried to raise a laugh, they were not very successful. There is much uneasiness as to what may happen to-morrow, when Bradlaugh will probably come to the fore again.

July 2.—The Bradlaugh incident has terminated, at least for the present. Gladstone found himself forced to bring the question under the serious consideration of the Cabinet on Saturday, and the result was that on Monday he gave notice of a resolution, to be brought forward last night, for admitting all persons who may claim a right to affirm to do so without question, and subject to their liability to penalties by statute. My first intention was to meet this by an amendment, declaring that if the House was of opinion that any steps were required to be taken, they ought to be taken by way of legislation rather than by way of resolution. Two or three of my colleagues in the House of Commons agreed in this view; but —, whom we found in the House of Lords, expressed himself decidedly against any language which might be held to pledge us to initiate or to support new legislation, and I subsequently thought it safer to confine myself to a declaration against the virtual rescinding of the recent vote. I wrote to Lord Beaconsfield, telling him what I proposed to do, and asking him to telegraph to me if he had any objection. Not receiving any answer, I gave my notice at two o'clock on Tuesday, and I subsequently heard through Rowton that the chief entirely approved. I had some difficulty in restraining Randolph Churchill

from putting down an amendment of his own ; and I could not prevent Gorst from giving notice that he would raise the point of order on Gladstone's motion, as being an infringement of the rule that matters once settled should not be brought forward again in the same session. He was technically wrong, though he argued his point with great ingenuity, and though in substance his contention was very much the same as my own. Gladstone's course was very unpalatable to many of his own friends, and is understood to have met with much opposition in the Cabinet.

July 3.—The Saturday sitting has not been brilliantly successful. The bill was not really through Committee at 12.30 Sunday morning. Our successors are beginning to find that the House is not so easy to lead after all.

July 9.—The Irish bill is becoming a very serious matter for the Government. We made as good a fight as we could upon the second reading on Monday, but were beaten by seventy-eight. We ought to have had at least twenty more of our own men. There was an unaccountable slackness among them, perhaps in part due to a feeling of hopelessness—partly, too, to bad whipping. However, we resolved to renew the fight on going into Committee, and after much consultation came to the conclusion that Pell should move an amendment limiting the operation of the bill to properties on which there had been ejectments during the period of distress. We had reason to believe that we should get some Liberal support to this. Meantime, and while our arrangements were being made, Law had put down a notice of amendment of his own, virtually providing for the extension of the Ulster custom to the distressed districts. This came about in the casual way in which the bill generally has been handled by the Government. During Gibson's speech on Monday he made a remark that the bill was so framed that a landlord could not even escape giving compensation for disturbance if he allowed the tenant to sell his interest in the holding. Gladstone shook his head, and made vigorous grimaces of dissent, declaring that he could ; and then Law framed his amendment to give effect to his chief's interpellation. Anyhow this amendment came as

a great surprise on the House, and had the twofold effect —1st, of puzzling the Whigs, and leading some of them to think that a great improvement was being made in the bill, and that they might relax their opposition to it, which was what the Government meant and hoped to do; and 2d, of irritating the Home Rulers, which was an effect wholly unexpected and very unwelcome to them.

This being the state of things, we met last night (Thursday) to proceed with the bill. The first thing we learned was that Lansdowne had resigned. This was startling and very significant. The Government were clearly in a very sore condition, and Gladstone and Forster had no temper to spare. Pell moved his amendment in a very short speech. Albert Grey seconded it, in a longer and a very able one; but he confined himself to a general attack on the bill, and said nothing about the particular amendment, except that he did not like it, because it gave too much colour to the bill itself. The Irish Solicitor-General (Johnson) rose to answer, and the Government probably expected a short speech and an immediate division. If so, they reckoned without Parnell, who rose with the Solicitor-General, and was called. He treated the amendment with contempt, but said the question really was, whether the bill was worth proceeding with, now that its character was to be so wholly altered as it would be by Law's amendment. For his part he should not take the trouble of voting for its further progress; but if it were carried on he should consider that the whole land question had been opened, and should move amendments to give it a proper form. Forster was much taken aback, and answered him with some irritation. Soon afterwards the Home Rulers retired to confer, and by-and-by Randolph Churchill came and told me that they had decided that if the division were taken on Pell's amendment, they should vote with the Government; but if it were taken on the main question, they would walk out. It was rather awkward to change front at that moment, but we contrived to ascertain from — and — that the Whigs would not vote with us then under any circumstances, though they would support us in moving amend-

ments in Committee, and, if necessary, in opposing the bill on the third reading; so we got Pell to agree to withdraw his amendment, and took our division on the main question, on which we were beaten by 56, or 22 less than on the second reading, though only two Whigs voted with us instead of 21 as on Monday.

The Home Rulers seem to think that they have lured the Government into a trap, and that they have got in so far that they can't well get back. Then, if the bill is lost this year, the Home Rulers will hold the Government next year to the principles they have admitted now, and will force them to carry them further.

July 11 (Sunday).—I went down to Hughenden in the afternoon. Lord Beaconsfield sent his carriage to meet me at Maidenhead, and I had a most charming drive of twelve miles. The Sunday trains to Wycombe are inconvenient. Found the chief very well, and delighted to see me. He has been quite alone with his peacocks, and revelling in the country, which he says he has never seen in May or June before. I gave him an account of the parliamentary situation. His general view was, that we ought above all to avoid putting our Whig friends into any difficulty by making them appear to be playing a Tory game. We must keep as clear as possible of any Home Rule alliance, and we had better not move amendments upon the bill. He greatly doubted the propriety of our supporting Law's amendment. We ought to make a strong effort to defeat the bill on the third reading. The Lords, he said, were determined to throw it out, and he hoped they would do so by a very large majority, a hundred or so. The effect of the proceedings upon next year would be salutary. After dinner we chiefly talked books. The chief is always at his best in his library, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy a good ramble over literature. He was contemptuous over Browning (of whom, however, he had read very little) and the other poetasters of the day, none of whom he thought would live except Tennyson, who he said was a poet, though not of a high order. He was much interested in my story of Sir R. Peel's consulting Monckton Milnes on the relative merits of Tennyson

and Sheridan Knowles, when he had a pension to dispose of. He talked of Lord Derby's translation of Homer, and said he had given his opinion against rendering him in blank verse. It was ballad poetry. Pope's style was better suited to it, but was not the right thing. Walter Scott would have done it better than any one. I told him of Tennyson's telling me that Burns originally wrote "Ye banks and braes" with two syllables less in the second and fourth lines, and that he had spoilt it to fit a particular tune. This was like, or rather the reverse of, Scott's treatment of the heroic couplet. The chief was warm against the Homeric unity, and considered that everything Gladstone had written on Homer was wrong. He agreed with my theory that no poet could be well translated except by a superior (or at least an equal) poet. I said Coleridge's "Wallenstein" was the most satisfactory translation I knew, but then Coleridge was quite equal to Schiller. "Yes," he said, "and better." He instanced Moore's "Anacreon" as a success, and considered the translator there quite equal to his original. He was very laudatory of Theocritus, and quoted his line on Galatea coquetting for the kiss as the most musical he knew in any language.¹ He used to be fond of Sophocles, and to carry him about, but did not much care for Æschylus. Euripides had a good deal of fun in him. Lucian was a great favourite, and he gave me the True History to read in bed. He was very fond of Quintilian, and said it was strange that in the decadence of Roman literature, as it was called, we had three such authors as Tacitus, Juvenal, and Quintilian. Horace, of course, he delighted in, and Virgil grew on one; he was a great admirer of Scaliger and of Bentley; Porson he did not think much of. He agreed with me in being unable to see the point of "Now Hermann's a German." He mentioned Bentley's correction of "rectis oculus" as a good piece of criticism. Ben Jonson he did not care for. I did battle for him, and he promised to read him again. He gave me a good deal of information about editions, and as to which were rising in price. Giffard's Ben Jonson was one which was going up wonderfully.

¹ Καὶ φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα δίδκει.

We lamented the disuse of classical quotations in the House of Commons. He said he had at one time tried to revert to them, but the Speaker (Denison) had asked him not. "Why? Do you think they don't like it?" "Oh no! the House rather likes it; but you are making John Russell restless, and I am afraid of his taking to it too. He gave us six or seven lines of Virgil the other night, which had not the smallest connection with his speech, or with the subject."

July 12.—Stayed at Hughenden till twelve, and had a pleasant walk in the garden with the chief.

He talked over the state of the House, and asked me many questions as to the progress of Harcourt, Chamberlain, Dilke, James, Herschell, &c., and also as to our own bench.

July 15.—The Irish Compensation Bill makes no progress. George Hamilton knocked a big hole in it on Tuesday by statistics, showing that the real number of evictions had been grossly exaggerated. In Donegal, out of 156 as stated in the Government return, there had been 45 cases in which the tenants had been readmitted as caretakers, and 93 in which they had signed acknowledgments and had not been disturbed at all, so that there had only been 18 cases of actual eviction, and of these, about half were due to the action, not of landlords, but of creditors. Gibson at the same time elicited a confession from Forster that the 3000 constables, said to have been employed in protecting process-servers in Galway, were not 3000 separate individuals, but a few hundred men employed several times over—like a stage army, as Plunket fairly said.

The oddest turn has been that of Parnell and his party, who are now beginning to take up against the bill, and are likely to join us in throwing it out on the third reading. The Government resemble Mr Pickwick going about with a horrid horse which he could not get rid of. Their floundering is quite pitiable.

July 28.—The Whigs disappointed us a good deal in the number they at last brought to the division on Monday. We had only sixteen of them. They were also

afraid to take the lead in moving the rejection of the bill. But Charles Fitzwilliam seconded the amendment in the first speech I ever heard him make in the House of Commons, and Ramsden spoke very well for us. The majority was only sixty-six, though the great body of Irish voted with the Government. There had been an idea that they would stay away, and Parnell actually was absent; but T. P. O'Connor, while treating the bill with great contempt, said he could not take the responsibility of walking out, as he had intended to do when he came into the House, and so he and those present gave their votes for the Government. T. P. O'Connor speaks remarkably well.

July 28.—On going down to the House to-day I received a letter from Bradlaugh, complaining of the scurrilous language used about him at several contested elections, and especially of Sir John Hay's speech at Wigton, and of a card circulated at Scarborough. I replied that I could not undertake any responsibility for the proceedings of candidates, and still less for those of their supporters, as by doing so I should seem to approve everything which I did not distinctly repudiate, however much I might disapprove it. He made a very temperate reply, thanking me for my letter, and saying he did not wish me to undertake any responsibility; but that he wished to point out to me that, if the Conservatives did not repudiate such language as was used about him, they must be taken to approve it. I must say I think he has ground for his complaint. Our friends want a lesson from "Hamlet," how to use a man according to their own nobleness. News of the disaster to General Burrows's force on the Helmund. I fear this will seriously affect our position throughout Afghanistan. It comes most unfortunately, just as Abdur-Rahman was getting into the saddle.

To August 9.—We have passed a busy fortnight with the stirring events of the debate in the House of Lords on the Irish bill, and the scene of Gladstone's illness. It may be hoped that in both cases we have seen the worst of it, and shall be *quittes pour la peur*. The

majority in the House of Lords was a crushing one, and the bill would have been defeated by the number of Liberals voting against it, even had no Conservative been in the division. Cairns's speech on the second night was the great one of the debate, though it was of course less lively and telling than Salisbury's. Lord Beaconsfield's does not seem to have been one of his best. He told me he was embarrassed by Gladstone's illness. There seems to have been no question of resignation after the defeat. Probably none of the Cabinet, except Bright and Chamberlain, liked the bill, or were otherwise than angry with Gladstone and Forster for letting them into the scrape.

Pynes, September 7.—Note report of Gladstone's speech on Cowen's interpellation (Saturday, September 4). He misrepresents the action of the Powers in dissuading Greece from joining Russia against Turkey. It was in the interests of Greece herself that she was dissuaded from taking a course which would have exposed Athens to destruction by the Turkish fleet. Of course there would have been great pressure then put on the Powers, and especially on England, to interfere on her behalf; and Turkey might have been willing to attend to our remonstrances, but only with the condition that, if we held her back from striking at the ally of Russia, we should assist her against Russia herself. We did the best we could in obtaining for Greece a hearing at Berlin, and in then obtaining for her, without war, a claim and (so to speak) an international title to a revised frontier, such as she very likely might not have obtained had she gone to war. True, she is still left unsatisfied; and we are all ready to admit that Turkey may justly be called on to fulfil her engagements. But I should dispute the proposition that the action of the Powers in restraining Greece from joining in the Russo-Turkish war gave her a special moral claim on their consideration.

Mr Gladstone's remarks on the concert of Europe also deserve attention. He hints that the late Government broke up the concert and adopted a line of isolated action, having for its end British interests alone, and pursued it regardless of the rights and interests of others. He also

says that it is "almost a moral impossibility that the whole of the united Powers of Europe ever can consciously act together in the pursuit of an object that is unjust. Errors may be committed, but injustice is hardly conceivable, whilst selfishness is totally impossible." Now it is clear, at any rate, that two or more nations may easily combine for unjust and selfish purposes, as Russia, Austria, and Prussia for the partition of Poland, or Austria and Prussia for the dismemberment of Denmark, and that the other Powers may, through timidity, indolence, or selfish indifference, allow them to act as they please; and so a virtual concert of the Powers may easily commit injustice. And this it was that we desired to guard against when we refused to join in the Berlin Memorandum in 1876. That was a nominally concerted action to be taken by all the Powers, but it would really have been a concert of three Powers only, acquiesced in through timidity or indifference by the rest, had not England dared to have an opinion of her own.

His closing observations on the unreasonableness of pledging the Government to summon Parliament before adopting any measure which can lead to coercion are very refreshing, and contrast curiously with his language in opposition.

Lord Granville's apology for Forster's language about the House of Lords is also well worth noticing. Clearly the Irish Secretary had had a good thrashing in the Cabinet. However he may explain away his words, there can be no doubt of the *animus* with which they were spoken.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN AND OUT OF PARLIAMENT, 1880-85.

THE later years of Sir Stafford Northcote's life were crowded with great and momentous events. As to most of these, owing to the position of his party out of office,

he occupied the attitude of a critic and of a teacher. In Parliament his business was to criticise, and his criticism was ever fair, and even generous. Again, he was much occupied out of Parliament in journeys to distant towns all over the country, where he did his best to educate his listeners in politics as understood by him. In the chapter on Sir Stafford as a parliamentary leader, much of his activity has already been described. More as to his private impressions will be learned from the diaries which he kept at intervals from 1880 to 1886. In this chapter we shall endeavour briefly to describe his principal contributions to discussion in the House of Commons and on the platform. The events which he had to watch, the policy which he had to criticise, were extraordinary. There were the relations of the Liberal Government to Ireland in the first place. The Government, as is usual with new English Governments, made an attempt to govern without coercion, without renewing the Peace Preservation Act. Then came disorders. The Act was renewed, the Land Bill was also brought in—"A bill of Belial; there is no ruin to which it may not lead," said Lord Beaconsfield. Then came the "No Rent" manifesto; the imprisonment of Mr Parnell and many of his associates. Next followed their release—the "Kilmainham Treaty," or arrangement, or whatever it should be called. Mr Forster and Lord Cowper resigned on this, and presently Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke were murdered. A new period of repression or coercion followed.

Abroad we were not more tranquil. There was the rising in the Transvaal, the inglorious defeats, the convention with the Boers, and the surrender of the Transvaal. In Egypt there was Arabi's movement, the Alexandrian riots, the bombardment of the town, and Tel-el-Kebir. Russia gave us anxiety on the Afghan frontier, France in Madagascar. The Mahdi's propaganda threatened the Soudan and Egypt. Hicks was permitted to go to his doom; Sinkat and Tokar fell; Gordon was sent on his ambiguous mission, failed, was too long neglected, and the attempt to rescue him ended in the disaster of Khar-

toum. The Government accumulated unpopularity and misfortunes. The Reform Bill was introduced and carried; but the combined troubles of the Government ended in a defeat on the Budget. Lord Salisbury held a brief tenure of office. Sir Stafford was raised to the House of Lords, with the position of First Lord of the Treasury. The Conservatives were defeated at the general election. Mr Gladstone came in with his Home Rule Bill: it was outvoted; and in the new Government Lord Iddesleigh held the Foreign Office. In a very few months the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, the appointment of Mr Goschen to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and Lord Salisbury's choice of the Foreign department for his own, left Lord Iddesleigh without place in the Government. His death followed shortly afterwards—his old malady, an affection of the heart, suddenly declaring itself.

The record of these years, of these events, of this close to a long career, can only be brief.

Sir Stafford bore the heavy blow of the defeat in 1880 with his usual good-humoured and courageous stoicism, as his diaries partly prove. To Lord Beaconsfield he wrote, when all hope was ended:—

There is no use writing about the situation now. I suppose we made a mistake in dissolving; but I doubt whether we should really have gained much by waiting till the autumn, and we acted on advice which seemed good, though it now turns out that our advisers were greatly misled. . . . I hope you are pretty well. This great blow does not do any one any good; but I feel very little doubt that a reaction will come, and, even if it should not replace us in office, it will take the form of a juster recognition of your great services during the critical period we have passed through. The new Government will have some difficult nuts to crack, and it is yet to be seen whether their teeth will not be broken. I take for granted that, unless some external cause prevents it, they must bring in a Reform Bill either next year or the year after, so the Parliament will hardly be a long one.

Later he speaks of hopes of further service "when the nation comes to its senses." The Liberal Government

"seem to be finding out that they have heavier tasks than they expected."

Sir Stafford was unrivalled in the rare skill of waging a losing fight, playing a losing game, with courage and with good temper. He has been called an optimist; but it would be more fair to say that he deemed pessimism to be allied with cowardice. "Tyne heart, tyne a'" (lose heart, lose everything), says the Scottish proverb, with which he agreed. He never lost heart; and while we keep that, other losses may be reckoned, or would be reckoned in the stoical philosophy, as relatively unimportant. He had stated years before, in a speech at Exeter, when he assumed the leadership of the House of Commons, the nature and limits of his so-called optimism:—

If the term optimist means one who thinks that everything at the present moment is as perfect as it can be, and that there is no need for us either to endeavour to improve or to take care lest damage should be done to that which we possess, then I altogether repudiate the title as one which is incompatible with me in every sense. But if it is meant by the use of that expression to describe one who is disposed rather to look on the bright than on the gloomy side, one who is disposed to give credit to his friends and opponents for the best rather than the worst constructions that can be put upon their deeds; if it is meant for one who is prepared to hold the view that though over-trustfulness is foolish and may lead to mischief, that over-suspiciousness may also be foolish and lead to harm; if these are the ideas that are associated with the word optimism, then I claim to be an optimist. I believe it is only by going on with one's work in a spirit of cheerfulness and hopefulness, in a spirit of readiness to acknowledge good rather than to distress ourselves by a possibility of evil, I believe it is only in that way that the real work of statesmanship is to be done. I believe, myself, that is the spirit in which English statesmen should endeavour to act.

There was in him a good deal of the British soldier's feeling, who, outnumbered and outmanœuvred, is said to put his trust in "the luck of the British army." Pessimism is always easy in human affairs, especially in an age with so troubled a present, so dark a future, as our own. It may be combated by taking long views, and by believ-

ing that as good times, and bad times, and all times end, ours, too, may some day pass into a brighter tranquillity. Or we may try the other plan, Sir Stafford's, and, taking short views, live in the day and for each day's work.

His own work in Parliament, as we have said, was the task of criticism. For this he was eminently well adapted, if criticism be the effort "to see things as they are." But it is not this intention, so much as the desire to prove them to be of one given complexion or the other, that usually animates parliamentary criticism. For this labour he was not naturally gifted; he trusted to reason more than to rhetoric, and disdained noble opportunities of declamation. Where it would have been easy to appeal to passion, he preferred argument. He often almost studiously understated his case, as when, in regard to the Kilmainham affair, he said that the occurrence seemed to demand "a good deal of explanation." He was less anxious to embarrass his opponents than to guide them. He kept insisting on the need of a reasoned policy, which would at least try to consider all possible results of this conduct or that situation. Such is the ideal policy of a leader of Opposition in a state formed by rational men.

When Parliament opened, in January 1881, even his optimism did not enable him, as he said, to take a rose-coloured view of affairs in Ireland. Later events made this endeavour yet more difficult. People in England, he complained, did not realise the condition of Ireland. They saw the rights of property and of individual liberty overborne, they saw as if they saw it not. Mr Gladstone, when aiming at office, had done what Sir Stafford could not do, and had viewed the Green Isle through spectacles of rosy tint. He had spoken of "an absence of crime, a general sense of comfort and satisfaction." Consequently he had not renewed the Peace Preservation Act. Mr Childers had travelled in Ireland, and had described himself as "a passer-by." Sir Stafford was reminded of two other notorious passers-by, the priest and the Levite, "on the other side of the way." And now Ireland had two Governments, that of the Queen and that of the Land League. "Do not let us then be told that the Govern-

ment has not broken down. The Government *has* broken down. They were now asking for larger powers. Why did you not do it before? . . . You might have put out the flame while it was small." The agitation in Ireland was really directed against all holders of property, against every class that opposed the Land League. More was intended—legislative separation was intended. The revolution was political and social. Willing workers were forbidden to work. The remedial legislation of 1870 was mere "tinkering"—did not reach the root of the evil. If people were not shot, they regarded being boycotted as something rather worse (January 6, 1881). On a later day (January 17) he repeated that Mr Parnell occupied the position of a rival power, and aimed at "the ultimate separation of the Legislatures of the two countries." He demanded the vindication of order as the first thing needful. He was not opposed to a revision of the land laws. "We are most anxious that the land laws of that country should be of such a nature as really to suit the necessities of the people, and to provide, as far as possible, for the proper cultivation of the soil, and for the maintenance of a happy and contented population upon it." In criticising the new Land Bill (May 19, 1881), he kept asking for clearness of statement, definition of such a term as "tenancy." "We never know exactly where we are: when we try to express a supposed meaning we are told we are wrong, and when we try another we are told we are equally at fault. Do not," he said, "apply a false remedy. What is it, after all, that Ireland requires? It requires for its development the application of capital; it requires the confidence which produces capital; and it requires, what is still more, energy and wisdom in the application of that capital." "Moral restraint, enterprise, self-exertion," were needed; was the bill likely to bring these virtues in the folds of its clauses? If the changes did not produce a total revolution, "a total destruction of what is called landlordism," then the smaller changes scarcely touched the fringes of the question. Only confusion and quarrelling would be produced, he feared; and the fears have not been without justification. A revolu-

tion was to be intrusted to a Commission "of whose composition and powers we do not at present know anything." Many of his opponents seemed "to hate landlords more than they loved Ireland." The people of Ireland would be taught their true lesson backwards, taught to rely on Governments and Commissions rather than on themselves. They would be taught that "when they are in difficulties there is a simpler course than work—that is, agitation." An old-fashioned maxim maybe; Sir Stafford had not moved with the times. Lord Hartington, however, thought he was moving with them, and that he no longer denounced "the three F's" as "Force, Folly, and Fraud," but was rather inclining to one of the three F's, "Fair Rent." Sir Stafford, however, was immovable in his opinion that they were passing "a bill which has never been sufficiently explained" (June 13, 1881.)

In the following year (February 8, 1882) he gave his views of coercion. If resorted to, it ought to be as a policy, not as "a hateful incident." Government had asked for powers, had obtained them: had failed at first to employ them, hoping that the mere threat would suffice. The Land Commission had not acted as it had been expected to act. "The interest of the landlords ought to be regarded like the interests of other classes. If not, why not?" Yet the real root of the evil had not been reached. Terrorism prevailed in Ireland: little result had come from imprisoning the Irish leaders. Then, "What are our prospects when we go back to the ordinary state of the law?" The Government could destroy, not reconstruct; and he quoted the words of Catherine de Medicis to her son, after the murder of the Duc de Guise: "*Vous savez tailler, il faut savoir coudre.*" They could slice, they could not sew. The Irish were being led to expect something more,—was it a Parliament of their own?

Probably no one knew exactly how much was intended, or what doors were being kept open. All this was opposed to Sir Stafford's constant appeal for a coherent policy that might be avowed and carried through. The release of the Kilmainham captives was another opportunity for similar criticism. What did it mean? On

what, if any, conditions were the prison gates opened? On this topic it was often his duty to press questions which perhaps have not yet been satisfactorily answered. In their Kilmainham transaction, Sir Stafford admitted that the Government were consistent at least. "They are proceeding on the principles on which it seems to me that they have all along proceeded. These principles are somewhat those of a pendulum, which swings sometimes to the one side and sometimes to the other. . . . They are pursuing a policy which they have not thought out to its ultimate issues. . . . They are without a policy which they have themselves sought and decided on, and which they are prepared to recommend on their own authority to the House."

These remarks were made on May 2. On May 6, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke were murdered by men who, in Mr Parnell's opinion, "must have absolutely detested the cause with which I have been associated," and who, in fact, must have done it to spite Mr Parnell and his allies (May 9, 1882). Sir Stafford in the House merely uttered a few words of sympathy with the victims of the Invincibles, and of support to the Government. In a debate on Irish policy (May 16), he returned to the subject of Kilmainham. The Prime Minister had said that there had been nothing in the nature of a negotiation. The Chief Secretary, Mr Forster, spoke of the strong objection which he felt to govern Ireland by negotiations with persons who had broken the law. It was now that Sir Stafford "felt convinced that there is a good deal which requires explanation. We know a great deal now that it is important we should know; but I do not even yet feel sure that we know all." His efforts to have the subject thoroughly examined were defeated.¹ He feared that submission had been made to the forces of dishonour. Holding these ideas, uttered out of Parliament as well as in it, as will be shown, he naturally resented Mr John Bright's speech at Birmingham, in which he said that the Conservatives were "found in alliance with an Irish rebel party, the main portion of whose funds, for the pur-

¹ *Hansard*, cclxvi. 107, 703.

poses of agitation, come from the avowed enemies of England." Mr Bright had added that this unholy alliance made the work of the House of Commons impossible. These were not charges that could apply to Sir Stafford, who (June 18, 1883) made them the subject of a speech on breach of privilege. Mr Bright expressed his sense of Sir Stafford's courtesy in making his motion. He admitted that the word "alliance" was capable of being interpreted in a sense which he did not intend it to carry. He did not mean that there had been "any kind of arrangement." The dispute ended in a cruel display of Irish ingratitude, which he has doubtless forgiven, and even forgotten, towards Mr Gladstone. He was accused, by Mr Callan, of joining Mr Bright in hallooing "Mad dog"!

The Irish question illustrates the old controversy as to whether a democracy can be an imperial power—whether it can govern other States. History has still to show whether or not, on a large scale, a democracy can govern itself; whether its proper place is not in something like the Greek system of the *πόλις*, with its natural advantages and corresponding drawbacks. A democracy can have no better opportunity for the wider governing functions than under a really trusted leader, such as, in widely different historical circumstances, and with aims and characters leagues apart, Pericles was in Athens, and Mr Gladstone in England. Yet it was under Mr Gladstone that the constant lack of a stable, and far-sighted, and consistent policy displayed itself. The affairs of the Transvaal, of Egypt, of the Soudan, evoked from Sir Stafford precisely the same sort of criticism as the affairs of Ireland. The difficulties were, indeed, immense, and not to be overrated. We showed, as Sir Stafford declared, want of power, want of grip, want of consistency, in the Transvaal. He could easily defend the Conservative Government from the charge of having caused the Transvaal troubles by the annexation. The annexation, at the moment when it was made, probably saved South Africa—above all, the Dutch parts of South Africa—from being swept by the Zulus, and from what would have made that calamity possible, internal anarchy.

It turned out that the Boers, after we destroyed the Zulu military organisation, no longer needed nor wanted our presence. The Conservatives, Sir Stafford argued (June 25, 1881), had been anxious to give to the Boers "that measure of representative institutions, and that measure of local self-government, which might be reasonably desired by them." But his party was expelled from office. The Liberals might then have peacefully reversed the measure of annexation. Or they might have maintained British authority at any cost, later. But they did talk of the iniquity of shedding blood, almost all the blood shed being that of gallant British soldiers, sacrificed by the most insane leadership that ever courted disaster. "Arguments of that sort," about bloodshed, "are among the arguments that make one ashamed of one's self. . . . We say your policy was faulty as a whole." If the soldiers had only been allowed to charge at Majuba when they wanted to charge; when Ian Hamilton repeatedly crossed the line of fire to ask General Colley for a charge,—Privates Helmsley and Boyle actually charged alone, and fell,—then we might have held Majuba, and then it is probable that the Transvaal would never have been given up. But some blindness of fate overcame General Colley; we were defeated without fighting, and then it was that the Government, which began the war, talked of "bloodshed," and surrendered. Even afterwards to conquer the Boers was not beyond our power. But the Government, as Sir Stafford said, conducted the negotiations "with divided minds." They ruined confidence in England. They did not, as Sir Stafford told them, remember the advice of Polonius:—

"Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee."

But, now that negotiations had gone so far, he "should be sorry to say anything that would still further weaken the hope of a satisfactory settlement of this matter."

In the affair of withdrawing from Candahar, Sir Stafford had to defend his old agreement with Sir John Lawrence's

policy, as not inconsistent with his present disinclination to leave Candahar. Circumstances had altered, by the nearer neighbourhood of Russia to Afghanistan. We were told that Russia had been justified in her overtures to the Ameer. "Well; but if she were justified, that proves our case: it proves that though you are not afraid of Russia when you are at peace with her, . . . yet that if you ever come into difficulties with Russia, it is in her power to interfere with you in a very inconvenient way in Afghanistan." He was not to be accused of wishing to enlarge our empire. "I can only say for myself it is that which I most shrink from if it can in any way be avoided." He appealed to the authority of Lord Lawrence, who held that it would be our duty to interpose, in case of Afghan dealings with Russia. He did not believe that the Government, in quitting Candahar, had thought the question out any more than they usually did think questions out. He asked if our Indian policy should be at the mercy of every general election. "In adopting such a course, you are attempting one of the rashest and maddest feats that are possible."

Such, however, is the nature of a democracy that would be imperial. He believed that if the Liberals were in power for twenty years, "at the end of that period there will be very little of the British empire left for them to govern." That seems highly probable in any case, for democracies have never yet succeeded in being imperial. They have other aims, other ambitions, inconsistent with empire.

On the Egyptian troubles, the wildly mismanaged bombardment of Alexandria, Sir Stafford had to remark (June 27, 1882), that "the Government are attempting to make war upon peace principles, and such an attempt must always fail." As to our "military operations," which were not war and were in self-defence, he examined that argument from the point of view of Arabi; "was *he* not entitled to defend himself against the ships which were coming against him?" These arguments of the Government weakened their case, and reflected very severely on their ally, the French. The Conservatives would support the Govern-

ment "on the ground of national interests"; but retained the right to criticise and disapprove of their policy, their miscarriages and shortcomings, their wanton sacrifice of the influence of the Porte. Government at once hampered and isolated us, for example, by not being able to land troops in the seething tumult of bombarded Alexandria. Mr Gladstone found these charges "too vague and general."

Opportunities of criticism less vague were unfortunately frequent in the miserable business which began with General Hicks's march against the Mahdi, and went on through the series of disasters at Sinkat, Tokar, El Teb, Suakim, and Khartoum. On February 12, 1884, Sir Stafford had to move a vote of censure on Government. Their main fault had been the shirking of responsibilities which could not be shirked. England, like Pontius Pilate we may say, was trying to wash her hands of guilt which clings to her. If the Conservatives had been responsible, as they were told, for the misdeeds of Turkey, much more were the Liberals responsible for the misfortunes of Egypt and our own. "I venture to think that the treatment which General Hicks received, beginning from the time when he was first brought into communication with Lord Dufferin, to the time when his life was sacrificed, was of the most extraordinary character, and amounted to the sacrifice of General Hicks." "The Government would seem to have more regard for their responsibility than for their honour."

Why continue this criticism, so unfortunately obvious, so undeniable, as one is reluctantly compelled to feel, and yet so impotent at the time, so unavailing now? Gordon had been sent alone, unaided, on his dubious effort, and Sir Stafford could only hope that Gordon was not to be treated like Hicks; that his position was not to be "confused." Sir Stafford had never felt any confidence in Gordon's mission. He wanted to know (April 3, 1884) whose servant Gordon was to be. "No man can serve two masters." The "plans," doubtfully attributed to General Gordon, "had always seemed to him rather vague and extravagant." Mr John Morley, when Gordon had fallen, turned this phrase of Sir Stafford's against him. He had a perfect right to

entertain these opinions, nor do they at all clash with our admiration of the best, the bravest, the purest of men. Gordon's mission was not of Sir Stafford's sending. In various points Gordon was, if not "extravagant," at all events too much outside the common course of mankind to be a cautious cold negotiator. Every one who knew him at all, knew that he loved honour more than any earthly reward; that once sent, unsupported, to do his best, he would relinquish anything sooner than honour. Those who knew this should either not have sent him out, or should have trusted and supported him. He was not the man to make a cat's-paw of: it was by no means safe to imagine that he would take measures first for his own safety. He carried the honour of England, as he understood it, a stainless shield without which he would never return from any fray. In vain Sir Stafford kept asking the Government for their policy. "Is it their policy to let things drift entirely, or are they going to stir?" Mr Gladstone resented the occupation of many nights (seventeen) with this question. "They will have made a precedent of pushing a question of this kind in a measure and to a degree to which I declare, so far as my knowledge goes, there is nothing approaching a resemblance in the whole history of the House of Commons." Mr Gladstone thought Sir Stafford's assertion that General Gordon's plans had failed (he had been refused Zebehr, with Sir Stafford's approval) was not "beneficial." Was it premature? Had he "anticipated the fact"? History knows, and knows, too, that if aid was sent too late to Gordon, if the blood and labour of our bravest men was spent in vain, the fault did not lie with Sir Stafford Northcote. Speaking at Barnstaple, as a candidate for that division of North Devon in 1885, when Khartoum had fallen, when Gordon's body lay on the sands or tossed on the Nile, Sir Stafford said:—

This nation has exerted itself to prevent, and to crush in its cradle, the slave traffic in the interior of Africa. It was for this purpose that that gallant hero whose name will always be a household word in England—great and good General Gordon—it was to crush that traffic in its cradle that he sacrificed his

time, his energy, and in the end life itself. It was because he loved those nations who were suffering as he knew from the great evils which civilisation and religion alone could cure—it was because he sympathised with these nations, that he placed his services at the command of the British Government, and that he undertook a mission which few others, or none, would have dared to think possible. He undertook that mission in a spirit of reliance upon God and of trust in His providence, and in reliance upon the hearty support of his countrymen, which carried him through the greatest dangers and difficulties, and which, as I firmly believe, would have enabled him to accomplish his object, had the expected succour been in time. I said just now that his was a name which we should always regard as a household word, and to which we should point with gratitude and pride; but at the same time I fear we must add that it is a name which will call a blush to our countenances when we think how that great and good man was abandoned, when we think of the last months of his life, struggling against desperate odds, and always hoping against hope that England would in due time come forward and rescue him.

This is a theme from which one turns with an inextinguishable shame and regret. Years have passed, feelings have lost their edge: it scarcely becomes us now to use Gordon's name—it never became us to use it as a party watchword—as a reproach to this individual or that. With comparatively few exceptions, in the press and elsewhere, the country was ignorant and supine. Gordon is our common shame and our common glory; his glory alone is shared by the gallant men who, to save him, gave their lives too late, suffered all extremes of labour and of distress, and were vanquished only by space and time. The names of our soldiers are untarnished by this dishonour. Gordon lives yet in our hearts, a light to lighten our conduct, and aid those who lack his courage and his force, to try at least to imitate in their lives his purity, his piety, his goodness, his contempt of wealth and fame and death. He deserves better than to be the hero or the reproach of a party. "A man," said Sir Stafford, "of whom it has been truly said that he was of a heroic character; a man who was above all things loyal, unselfish, earnest, fearless, devoted to the duties which he undertook, and ready to

spend and be spent in the honour of God and his country" (February 23, 1885).

In the affair of the Reform Bill of 1884-85, Sir Stafford's most interesting part has been recorded by himself in a note, a portion of which may be published for its curious interest:—

The main lines of the discussions on the Franchise Bill of 1884 and the Redistribution of Seats Bill (1884-85) are sufficiently known. The autumn agitation was directed by the Liberals, not so much to the passing of the Franchise Bill, as to which there was at least a profession of agreement on all sides, as to the exciting public feeling against the House of Lords. The results of the meetings held throughout the country seemed to be these: 1. That the passing of the Franchise Bill was adequately desired (though there cannot be said to have been any ardent demand for it), on the part of a large number of persons, especially in the north of England and in Scotland. 2. That it was generally admitted that the extension of the franchise ought to be accompanied, or immediately followed, by a redistribution of seats. 3. That the animosity of the fight was directed against the action of the House of Lords.

It seemed probable, when Parliament reassembled in October, that the House of Lords would again receive the Franchise Bill in the same spirit as that which they received it with in July; but they had pretty well agreed to give it a second reading, and then to fix the next stage for a distant day (in March or April), so as to give time for the Government to introduce their Redistribution Bill and pass it through the House of Commons before the Peers proceeded further with the first bill. What course the Government might take upon this was of course uncertain; but it was hoped by some, and feared by others, that they would throw up the bill, dissolve, and set on foot a more violent agitation against the House of Lords.

I never shared the extreme anxiety which was felt by so many on both sides; but it was obvious that the alarm was of itself likely to cause danger, as the cry of "Fire" does in a crowded building. . . .

Already in the early autumn some communications had been opened with the Opposition leaders through the Duke of Richmond; but these had led to little more than a conference between the Duke, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Cairns, and to a substantial agreement between them as to the course to be taken in the House of Lords. When we reassembled (October 23), and when

I opened the debate on the Address in terms of studied moderation, Mr Gladstone replied to me in a speech of no compromise, and of menace to the House of Lords.

On Sunday, October 26, Lord Norton came to me with a letter which he had received from Gladstone, referring to a conversation they had had at Grillion's in July or August, when Gladstone had asked him what it was that the Conservatives wanted,—if it was that the urban element should be kept as much as possible out of the counties, he (Gladstone) agreed with us. Gladstone had now noticed some expressions of Carnarvon's at some public meeting, and taking a hint from them, he suggested some kind of intermediaries who might draw the scheme of redistribution. This had brought Adderley [Lord Norton] to town in a hurry, and it was obvious that Mr Gladstone expected him, for we were all three in the Chapel Royal, and I observed some significant glances as he saw Norton come up to speak to me. We called in Arlington Street, and had a talk with Salisbury; but the whole matter was very vague. Reference was made to Sir Erskine May, who had been staying at Highclere, and who had been in communication with Gladstone. Norton went to see him, and on subsequent days I also saw him; but everything was vaguer and vaguer. I have a memorandum, dated October 28, giving the substance of my first conversation with him, and another, without date, of a further conversation after he had seen Sir C. Dilke. It may be observed that various communications had been proceeding between Sir M. H. Beach and Lord Hartington, of which I was only partially cognisant, as we did not wish them to commit us as leaders of the party. The advantage we anticipated from these communications was, that we might disabuse the Government of the idea that we only wanted the Redistribution Bill produced in order that we might break up the whole Reform scheme by means of it. That this idea existed among them was evident from some conversations which I had with Lord Tolle-mache, who, while a staunch Conservative, was in close personal relations with Mr Gladstone and ——. He showed me a ridiculously alarmist letter from the latter, to which I wrote a soothing reply.

A private meeting with Mr Gladstone himself was finally arranged.

On the 13th November my eldest son came to see me, and gave me to understand that Algernon West and he had been speculating about my views of the position. I said to him what

I had been saying all along—to Lord Tollemache, to Mr Peel, and others—by some of whom it must have been communicated to the Ministers—viz., that in my opinion if the Government would introduce the Redistribution Bill all would go right. He asked me whether this might be communicated to Mr Gladstone as my personal opinion? I said, "Yes." He then went away; but in the course of the afternoon he came down to the House of Commons and told me that, as soon as West had mentioned this to Lord Granville, Lord Granville had gone over to see Mr Gladstone, and then desired West to acquaint me that Mr G. would like an hour or two to consider so important a communication, and in the meantime Lord G. and Mr G. would think it most desirable if, on the grounds of old private friendship, I would meet Mr Gladstone for a short conversation either at West's house or Lord Granville's, or elsewhere. I said I must take a little time to consider this request, and I went into the House of Lords and consulted Salisbury. We agreed that I had better hear what G. had to say. I told Walter of this, and he went away, and came back with a message that "Mr G. is nervous about meeting in the daytime, as so many people watch him. He dines with West to-night (in St James's Palace). Could I meet him there about eleven o'clock, when the guests will have gone?"

I went accordingly at eleven o'clock, and was let in by Mr West. I found Gladstone alone, and remained with him about half an hour. The substance of our conversation is in my letter to Lord Salisbury (November 13), of which I have kept a copy.

The result of this and other negotiations was the announcement of the Government's willingness to communicate with the leaders of the Opposition on the details of the Redistribution Bill. The proposed conference was accepted, and comparative peace was restored.

The main lines of Sir Stafford's conduct as a critic of Government during his last years in the House of Commons have now been traced. On June 8, 1885, Government were defeated, on the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill. In his speech Sir Stafford objected chiefly to taxing a falling revenue in beer and spirits, and to confusing a moral and a fiscal tax. Taxes should be fiscal; but the Government seemed to think that beery and spirituous men were their opponents' chief supporters, and therefore meant to hit them in their

pleasant failings. He did not know that there was anything very novel or magnificent in his own principles of taxation, which were that you should raise money in the form most to the advantage and least to the disadvantage of the community, and that you ought, as far as possible, to keep your taxation steady. Mr Gladstone spoke of those principles as possibly deserving to be called truisms and platitudes. He also fell back on the celebrated surplus which was frittered away, and styled Sir Stafford "the author of habitual deficit." In opposition to Sir Stafford, he himself laid down the duty of "Pay your way," and found the real cause of opposition to the Government's proposals, not in compassion for the beer-drinker, but in dislike of the death duties. These arguments and amenities ended in the defeat of the Government by twelve votes.

On the following day, rumours already prevailed that Sir Stafford was to go to the Upper House as First Lord of the Treasury. Of the influences and motives for this change enough will be learned from the following diary, or at least as much as is deemed desirable. On July 6, Sir Stafford took his seat in the House of Lords as Earl of Iddesleigh, the name derived from a family estate in Devon. This was a sacrifice of himself to his party. His career had been in the Commons: in the Lords he occupied, for a few months in 1885, the position of First Lord of the Treasury, and in 1886 held the important post of Foreign Minister. On all these matters extracts from the diary of 1885 may now be given.

June 6, 1885 (Saturday).—Came up from Pynes this evening with Amyas. Very tired.

June 7.—Prepared scheme of speech for Budget debate to-morrow.

June 8.—The great debate came off to-night. Beach made a good speech; but was unlucky in what he said about a tax on tea. His words were greedily caught up by Sir C. Dilke, and I had, later, to do my best to explain them away. The result (a majority of twelve against the Government) took the House generally by surprise, though we ourselves had reckoned on a victory

by three or four votes. About forty of the Parnellites voted with us. The excitement on the declaration of the numbers was very great, and displayed itself rather indecorously. Randolph Churchill jumped upon his seat, and stood waving his pocket-handkerchief, and shouting. Walter [his eldest son] left the House with Algernon West, and said something about this being a curious end of Gladstone's career. West said, "Ah, this can't be the end now; you will see him come out more energetic than ever."

June 9.—Went to see Salisbury. I was strongly in favour of accepting office, considering that, with all its disadvantages, it was the only honourable course open to us after our action in turning out the present Government. I thought if we declined the responsibility now, we should be held to have justified the taunt that we have no policy and no men.

Had a good deal of talk with friends at the Carlton and elsewhere: opinions as to our taking office a good deal divided; but preponderance in favour. The real *crux* is in the question of Ireland. — strongly urges the duty of proposing a continuance of the present Crimes Act for one year. If the proposal is defeated, we can't help it, and must go on as best we can; but if we don't make it, we shall be held guilty by the whole of North Ireland.

June 10.—Report that Gladstone had gone to Balmoral, but this is incorrect. He was going, but is stopped by his doctor. The "dutiful communication" has been sent by messenger. Dined with the Middle Temple, to meet Prince of Wales and Prince Albert Victor on the latter being admitted to the Bench. Large party, and the hall full of barristers and students, who cheered several of us as we drank the loving cup, especially R. Churchill and myself.

June 11.—On coming home from a drive about seven, I found Cranborne waiting for me with a message that his father wished to see me, as he had been summoned to Balmoral. I found Beach with him. He asked me what I thought about taking office; and I replied that I still held that we were bound to make the attempt. Beach

urged the importance of making it quite clear to the world that we had no alternative. This is, of course, quite true, and it bears on the question which may arise as to dissolving on the old franchise, in case we are unfairly thwarted in necessary measures, after having been forced to take office. The more I think of the heads of Salisbury's scheme, the less I like it.¹ The point on which it will be necessary for me to insist is, that I should see all the Foreign Office despatches as if I were Prime Minister, otherwise we may be exposed to serious trouble.

June 12.—Telegraphed to Salisbury that the cardinal point of the constitution of the Cabinet seemed to me to require more consideration, and that I must ask him not to pledge me till I had seen him. Several visitors to-day, among them Sir ———, warmly thanking me for my services to the party, and hoping I would not desert them, at the same time offering his own if required. To House of Commons, where Gladstone stated that he and his Government had tendered their resignation on account of the defeat on the Budget, and *for no other reason*, laying some stress on the last words, whether as an answer to the charge of "riding for a fall," or whether to hint that the ground of the resignation was not a vital one, had they been pressed to withdraw their tender. The House remained sitting till the House of Lords sent down their amendments on the Seats Bill. Gladstone would have liked us to go through them at once, and I should not have objected; but some of our friends thought it better to wait till the amendments were printed. Coming home to dinner, found a telegram from Salisbury asking me to state in detail my difficulties as to the construction of the Cabinet. Wrote memorandum that the separation of Premiership from office of First Lord of Treasury being novel, there would be no precedents to guide us in distinguishing the functions of the one and of the other—*e.g.*, was the First Lord to be in distinct personal communication with the sovereign? Was he to be

¹ This scheme was, that Lord Salisbury should be Prime Minister and take the Foreign Office, and Sir Stafford Northcote be First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the House of Commons.

entitled to see all the Foreign Office despatches, as the Prime Minister is under the settlement of 1851 (Russell, Palmerston)? What appointments were to be at his disposal? I pointed out that in present state of affairs it was essential that the leader of House of Commons should be fully in possession of the foreign policy of the Government. Other matters, such as the *personnel* of the Treasury and offices connected with it, might be settled hereafter. A "scientific frontier" wanted.

June 13.— ——— this evening told me of the wish of the Carlton that I should go to the Upper House. With some of them it is a wish to get rid of me; with others it is anxiety for my health.

June 15.—Meeting in Arlington Street. Salisbury, Richmond, Carnarvon, Harrowby, Cranbrook, Cross, Smith, Beach, Mannors, G. Hamilton, and myself. Stanley had gone to Lancashire. Question whether we should take office put by ———, and answered affirmatively by all, except ——— and (in part) ———. House met, and Gladstone announced that he had authentic information that Lord Salisbury was engaged in forming a Cabinet, and that he wished the House to adjourn till Friday; Gladstone, however, thought that we might go through with the Lords' amendments on the Seats Bill, and might read the Princess Beatrice's annuity a third time. To this I assented, and the question that the Lords' amendments should be taken into consideration was put, Dilke explaining that the principal additions were for the purpose of expediting the dissolution, and that they had been inserted on the suggestion of Lord Salisbury. I confirmed this statement; but Gorst and the Fourth party objected to the House being hurried into the discussion, and moved the adjournment of the debate, which was, however, defeated by 333 against 36. Salisbury's present idea is, that I should take the post of First Lord of the Treasury, and lead the Commons, with F. Stanley for my Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have offered either to do this or go to the Upper House, taking the India Office. I have offered to do whatever he thinks best. I have not much heart in the matter. This has apparently been my last night

in the House of Commons. I have sat in it rather more than thirty years, and it has become part of my life.

June 19.—To the House at four o'clock. A most remarkable reception when I entered: it was difficult to say which side cheered me most. Speaker read Bradlaugh's letter. I asked Gladstone what counsel he meant to give on it. He replied, "None—at least none at present." I might then have moved the renewal of the order excluding Bradlaugh from the precincts of the House; but I did not like to mark my last appearance by the exclusion of another member. Great dinner at the Mansion-House to Conservative candidates. We had no reporters. Cranborne spoke very well, responding to toast of his father's health.

June 20.—The hitch still continues, and it seems to me likely to prove very injurious to our cause.

We are pestered by reporters, who cross-question the servants. Smith (the butler) was asked the other day what office I was to have? "After much consideration the Cabinet had offered me the private secretaryship to Lord Randolph Churchill."

June 24.—Went to Windsor by special train at 3.15. All the Cabinet except Richmond, who had hurt his foot; also Balfour (Local Government Board), Chaplin (Duchy), Dyke (Irish Secretary), Wolff (to go to Cairo), Selwin Ibbetson (a complimentary Privy Councillor). Returned by six.

June 25.—Began work in Downing Street. Appointed A. Saumarez and J. F. Daly private secretaries. Gladstone, whom I met on the stairs, was very civil, and presented me with three of his books on Homer.

Party meeting of both Houses at Carlton. Salisbury explained his reasons for taking office. I said a few words, and so did Beach. Several of our friends expressed regret at my leaving the House of Commons, while the Duke of Northumberland and others warmly welcomed me to the House of Lords.

These extracts are, of necessity, most fragmentary. Among the passages omitted, is one in which,—there can

be no harm in quoting it, and it is perhaps a proof of Lord Iddesleigh's personal fairness,—Lord Randolph Churchill is described as "certainly the shrewdest member of the Cabinet" which was presently evicted by the general election.

We have followed Sir Stafford's critical work in the House, from 1880-1885, the House which he left in the latter year. A few words may be said of his reception in Exeter and at Pynes, after he was raised to an earldom. Lord Iddesleigh's new honours were welcomed by his neighbours near Pynes and in Exeter. He arrived from London on the 13th of August: his tenantry and the people in the neighbourhood were bent on congratulating him, and the Conservative working men in Exeter were not backward in the same resolve. The local Liberals, also, were not displeased, and, with bunting and music, a very pretty display was made on the railway platform. A *feu-de-joie* of fog-signals was arranged as the train came in, and a happily phrased address was delivered. Lord Iddesleigh, in reply, feared that he could scarcely make himself heard by so large a gathering, and preferred to look on his welcome as personal rather than political. Speaking of Lady Iddesleigh, he remarked that she had shared the labours of his life, having received from her not only "comfort, support, and sympathy," but often having had "recourse to her pen" in order to ease him of the work that was more than a single hand could accomplish. As to the political situation, he remarked that the Government, like most Governments, had fallen, not under the attacks of the Opposition, but self-destroyed. The Conservatives would do their best. "You ought not to think so much of who is to have the honour of doing the thing, as to see that that which is necessary and right for the country is done:" a counsel of perfection this, which, if acted on, would introduce something better than that most imperfect institution, party government. Resisting the temptation of cries to "Go on," he spoke a few last words in acknowledgment of the general kindness. There was a long procession to Pynes, passing under arches lit with coloured lanterns, and the people took out the horses and



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PYNES

Residence of General Pynes at Fort Mifflin

Regimental Hospital

drew the carriage—near neighbours succeeding to admirers from Exeter,—an attention which a recipient of it once described as “perhaps most grateful to the horses.” So the procession reached home at last, among showers of flowers, and with singing, a happy example of a stainless popularity, honestly gained, and never lost. “If I felt I could command myself,” Lord Iddesleigh said, in replying to an address from his neighbours of Upton Pyne and Bramford Speke, “I would like to say a few words of Lady Iddesleigh, and for her; but I know that I could not. I know you all know her and love her so well, that it is quite unnecessary for me to try to put into language that which is in all your hearts. She does thank you most sincerely and cordially for this, the latest act of kindness—I will not call it the last—in coming to meet us on a day which must always remain in our memories.”

To every man, however indifferent to fame, the dearest honours he can receive are those which come to him in his own country, from his own people, and Lord Iddesleigh was rich in this kind of honour, proverbially rare.

But he was almost as busy in the country. He spoke in many distant places, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, the north of Ireland, Birmingham, and elsewhere. He was endeavouring to teach the new electors his confirmed doctrine, the doctrine of improvement on old lines, of honesty, steadiness, industry, all that could give confidence in England. He called himself an optimist, but in those speeches he faced facts, and a future that even to him seemed gloomy. To these tasks he devoted his last years, and did not spare his health, which was no longer what it had been. He never had Mr Gladstone's robustness, but he had great energy, and he expended it. He was not an eloquent orator, though his voice was clear and pleasant in conversation or in reading aloud. He was, by instinct, taste, and habit, no dealer in perorations; even before a popular audience he did not appeal much to sentiment, nor at all to passion. Yet he was popular on the platform. He had a telling knack of anecdote, and humour never divorced from good-humour. He did not hide his apprehensions, with all his courage and buoyancy.

He ventured to say what he saw, and to forecast things that, perhaps, may come to pass, as they have often come to pass before in history. Speaking in Edinburgh, in 1884, he said:—

I am afraid that the Government will take far too much to the numerical principle, and if you take to the principle of mere numbers, depend upon it you will be introducing the most dangerous change into the Constitution. The first effect of an appeal to the masses would probably be an agitation and then disappointment, and then what would flow from that? Personal rule. Then follows a system under which an individual would obtain a position in which he had, or in which he would exercise, personal authority which there would be no power of resisting. There is a curious saying I was reading the other day in a clever play written some years ago, describing the peculiarities of a government in which there was a constitutional monarch who found himself ultimately in the hands of a man who had begun with the most extreme doctrines of exaggerated Radicalism till, seeming likely to become the Minister of the Prince, he startles him with the following claim, "Why, if you refuse me absolute power, how in the world can you expect me to establish freedom?" That is the language that has been used and is being used now with regard to our great Prime Minister. They say, "This is the man, and we are content to support him whatever he may say or do." If you come to that, it will not be very long before the system produces a reaction, and you will find that there will be agitation meetings of trades-unions, and after that there will come a bureaucratic despotism; that is to say, the permanent officials will take the management of affairs into their hands, and Parliament will have little to do, and the great mass of the people will have little to do, and you will have all the evils of a bureaucratic Government; that is a very dangerous state of things, and one which we do not like to contemplate. I admit that I am travelling into the region of the future, and am giving you opinions which have yet to be verified. But depend upon it, that is the course which things are likely to take if you throw up the power of the Constitution. If you destroy or neutralise or turn into a mere sham the independent existence of the House of Lords, and if you proceed, as you would have to proceed, and as you have had plenty of suggestions you would have to proceed, to deal with the House of Commons upon equally stringent principles, we shall find that the power will pass away from our old parliamentary institutions, and that it

will fall into the hands of personal Government and what I call an autocracy tempered by despotism.

This may be, no doubt, but it seems likely that much will be suffered before we suffer anything like a personal despotism. More certain is another prophecy of his, that we shall have "a second chamber in the streets." That we have already, indeed; and, of all governments, government not by the people but by the mob is the least desirable. This is how he stated an obvious view:—

You will have the trades-unions developing their power, carrying on not only that which is legitimate and desirable—namely, the consideration of the proper interests of their own trades—but carrying on political business, and also interfering to overrule the elected representatives of the people. That is a danger which those who read history, and especially who read the history of that great revolution in France which took place now about a hundred years ago, will very easily appreciate and understand.

From these modes of popular sway, Sir Stafford expected, or feared, the overthrow of the English character for steadiness and honesty, the flight of capital. But where is poor capital to find a refuge? International disturbances will leave no land where capital can find security, and this was, perhaps, an element of the future which he did not foresee. Talking on this topic at West Calder, in November 1885, he spoke as follows:—

There are some people in this country who are always prophets of evil. There are some who think the greatness of Great Britain, of the United Kingdom, has now culminated, and that we have before us a terrible period of decline. I don't believe a word of it: I believe myself that our fate lies in our own hands. I believe, under Providence, that the energies of the people, if they are rightly directed, if they are allowed fair play, will pull us through all the difficulties of our situation, and will improve, instead of diminishing, the position of this country. Don't allow yourselves to be led away by the sort of teaching you hear from some quarters, that the great imperial questions don't concern the mass of the people—that what the masses of the people have to look to is the improvement of their houses, of their food, of their wages, and of their employment, and perhaps of the education of their children. These are all matters of the highest

importance, I admit. But you must not separate them and set them against the other calls upon the energies of the empire, because you may depend upon it if you do you will find you are only injuring and ruining the very classes in which you are interested, by bringing about the ruin and fall of the empire. Remember what a peculiar position this country stands in. We are not in the position of the United States of America, which our friends are pointing to and urging us to take as an example. We rejoice to see the prosperity which is to be found in these countries, but we are in a different position. We have not all that expanse of land—at least not within the four seas. We have not that unlimited power of disposing of the population; we have not the growth of the materials of manufacture which some countries enjoy. If everything were to begin again, you would only have one or two points on which you would be able to trade and hold your own in the intercourse with nations. But you have—and this is your great advantage—an established character; you have established the character for this country, that it does its work honestly and well, that it is to be trusted in all that it turns to, that it is to be trusted in all its relations. You have this advantage. It has already established such a large connection that it has become the centre of credit, that it has become a sort of depot for the trade of the large population of the world; and that as long as it fulfils these conditions, which have given it these advantages—as long as it takes full measure of that great accumulation of trade and credit which was set up by our forefathers—so long there will be in this country a state of things in which working men will be able to obtain employment, and the various classes of society will find that they share in the general prosperity.

It must be taken into account that we have accumulated in this little island so enormous a proportion of the population of the world, and in that way have gathered together much energy, which is displayed in our numerous industrial establishments. Think what it would be if that were taken from us; if the great mass of the people here were left without employment—without that which has been created and maintained by our system of credit, and our system of commerce, and above all, by the character you have obtained for honesty. Remember that, and do not be short-sighted enough—I put it only upon that ground—I do not speak of honesty or dishonesty; but who will be short-sighted enough to risk and jeopardise the general interest of the empire for the sake of these class interests?

The end of all these things is not to be foreseen. The

current runs ever swifter to the fall; and how the vessel is to bear herself in the gulf below, whether she is to be swamped, or to sail into smoother waters, no man can foretell. We are to have a new morality. Sir Stafford spoke for the old beliefs.

We have indicated the sentiments of Sir Stafford as to the Social question, the great question. He did not look forward to any vast change in human affairs, any complete reconstruction of society on a new and untried principle. To him it was a choice between bettering the world on the old lines of capital and employment, or, apparently, of mere chaos, without any escape save through autocracy. For example, he does not discuss the idea of "nationalising" land and capital, the aim of extreme reformers. On the matter of small agricultural holdings, a scheme which would be rejected by the extreme Left, he spoke thus, at Lynton, in May 1885:—

I have no doubt that a great deal might be made out of a movement, wise and judicious, for creating small holdings when the country is capable of supplying them, and when you have those who will be able to cultivate them well. But let me ask any good and sensible labourer what size the holdings should be, supposing it was decided to give them? I was told some time ago that there were thirty millions of people and sixty millions of acres of land, and that therefore everybody ought to have two acres apiece. I should like very much to have two acres in the heart of London, I think it would pay very much better than on Dartmoor or elsewhere; but we cannot all have our two acres in London, and let us suppose that some honest labourer were to have two acres of his own on Exmoor, what is he to do with it?

It is not the possession of land but the possession of the power of working the land that you have to consider. A man must expend a good deal of capital in order to get the means of working even two acres of land. If he has to buy a spade and hoe there is capital required, and if he has to get credit in order to supply himself with necessaries, and if he has got to wait in order to sell his produce, he is in great trouble and difficulty; but when he has got the property, is he to be more secure in his property than anybody else? Depend upon it, if you diminish the security of property the people who will feel it most will not be the rich, but the poor. The great support of sound agri-

culture is the capital which is expended upon it ; and if there is no security for expending the capital it will not be expended ; and if the capital is not expended, England will not be as productive as America or many other countries that could be named.

These remarks would be an answer to a scheme for giving everybody two acres of land of his own, but are not an answer to a scheme for making the State the owner of all land and of all capital. On Irish questions, too, he could merely say, in his own words, and with his own illustrations, what has been said so very many weary times. Thus at Paisley, in May 1886, he admitted that, in matters of commerce, Ireland had been very badly treated. England had behaved "in a most unworthy and selfish manner in crushing and keeping down the industries of Ireland." But he saw "no compensation in Home Rule." He thought Mr Gladstone would grant the demand of the Irish to their ruin, as the gods ruinously answer men's prayers, *poscentibus ipsis*. The sketch of Home Rule was a pretty sketch, not a practicable architect's plan:—

I remember quite well seeing once a very beautiful design—an elevation for a front of a house that was going to be built. It was the west front, and it was a very beautiful elevation ; but when the house came to be built, it appeared that the east front showed in a remarkable way behind the west front—that the whole did not fit together—and the result was that the whole thing was unsatisfactory indeed. The architect's defence was, "I had nothing to guide me in drawing the east front. I drew it from my view of the west front, and therefore I saw nothing of the inconvenience that arose.

The old system of life, more justly and liberally worked, was his idea of a remedy for Ireland. "Ireland requires many things ; but one thing she requires certainly—she requires to know she is governed."¹ This, it must be repeated, this and no revolutionary change, nor in finance any attempt at bringing back the mastodon of protection, whether under the name of Fair Trade or otherwise, was

¹ Hansard, May 16, 1882.

his policy. "I do not believe in some of the suggestions" (as to reciprocity and fair trade) "that are put forward by friends on my own side." He knew that Mr Cobden's ideal future of universal free trade had not arrived. It is very long on the road.

That which Mr Cobden asserted was bad for England and bad for the world, we say is bad for the foreigner and bad for the world also; but the difficulty lies in this—how are you to gain your end? When they were agitating they had an easy task comparatively—they had to convince the Parliament and the Government of England that it was desirable to put down the protection that then existed, and the thing was done. But how are you going to operate on the minds of the foreign countries and get them to do the same thing? That is the problem. Let us just look back for a moment at the history of the manner in which our free-traders have dealt with the question. When first they got the protective duties taken off, and the productions of England thrown open, they believed that all other nations would abandon their protective duties and that their hostile tariffs would fall down, as the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the trumpet. The prevailing belief that was in the minds of those men at the time was this—that England was the great obstacle to the free trade of the whole world, and that the landlords of England were the obstacles to that difficulty being removed in England. That was the view they took; but somehow or other the walls of Jericho did not fall down, and for some years, although we had very great prosperity, owing to the great reduction of our own tariffs, we did not find that the foreign markets were opened in the way that was expected.

Much worse than the evils we know, he thought, were those we fly to in "false remedies." This, in regard to all the new difficulties, which are only the world's old difficulties, far more widely felt by a more educated people, far more violently resented, was Sir Stafford's attitude in these late years of his life. He indulged in no dreams and no delusions. Fair trade, a specific of the moment, was "a pious opinion," not a practicable policy. The newer remedies meant national ruin. He disliked the signs in the heaven of politics, the strange conjunction of planets in the sky above England. At Aberdeen, in

1885, he happily and appropriately illustrated these from the ballad of "Sir Patrick Spens":—

Mr Chamberlain is not the leader of the party. The leader of the party is a much abler, much greater, and much more dignified person than Mr Chamberlain. I am prepared, from a long acquaintance with him, both as a friend and as an opponent in Parliament, to bear the highest testimony to the great abilities of the late Premier Mr Gladstone; at the same time, I think he is about the most dangerous statesman I know. What signs of danger are there? What signs of bad weather are there which you sometimes notice when storms are coming on? It always seems to me that the worst sign of bad weather is when you see what is called the new moon with the old moon in its arms. I have no doubt that many of you Aberdeen men have read the fine old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens, who was drowned some twenty or thirty miles off the coast of Aberdeen. In that ballad he was cautioned not to go to sea because his faithful and weather-wise attendant had noticed the new moon with the old moon in its lap.¹ I think myself that that is a very dangerous sign; and when I see Mr Chamberlain with Mr Gladstone, the old moon in his arms, I think it is time to look out for squally weather.

Such, and of such tenor, were his popular addresses. The following chapter will contain extracts from his diaries, and other accounts of his Irish journey, and his expedition, in a non-political character, to Edinburgh, at the Tercentenary of the University.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOLIDAYS AND HOLIDAY TASKS.

EVEN the weariest statesman is allowed a few holidays, especially when out of office. Sir Stafford's holiday-time

¹ "I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm."

was occasionally occupied by holiday tasks, as when he visited the north of Ireland in the autumn of 1883, and made political speeches. But his voyage to the Mediterranean in the Pandora, Mr W. H. Smith's yacht, in 1882, was purely unpolitical. Of both the Irish and the southern trips he kept diaries. Unluckily the brief notes on the Mediterranean cruise tell us little of what he thought and felt in Sicily, at Pompeii, in Carthage, and other scenes whose interest can only die with human memory of the past. The cruise was ill served by weather, and the diary once more makes us marvel at the courage of ladies, who are "not good sailors," and yet go down into the deep. Lady Northcote, Mrs Shelley (Lady Margaret Shelley), Mr Henry Northcote, Miss Smith, Mr John Northcote, and others, were the party which started from Portsmouth in the Pandora, on November 27, in stormy circumstances. The early part of the voyage was a series of puttings into havens, out of the rage of perilous seas. They began to think that they would never reach the "tideless dolorous Midland sea," and the shores where Carthage lies forlorn. Quoits on deck cheered the leisure of the vigorous. The less vigorous possessed their souls and kept their berths in patience.

At Gibraltar they got the impression, which Charles II. derived from Taunton, that it is always raining there. Indeed, if the weather was exceptional, it persevered in being "still more exceptional" day by day, and, as in another case of bad years in finance, "not to be exceptional was the exception." They were told that Tangiers would prove a haven hard to win, and were warned as to the strength of

"The running seas
Between the Pillars called of Heracles."

Wet weather pursued them to Sorrento. They visited the site of Carthage.

"Dec. 31 (*Sunday*).—The consul came to lunch, and afterwards took the gentlemen of the party to Carthage, —none of the ladies caring to go. We drove first to the College of St Louis, which occupies a site on the Citadel

(the ancient Byrsa), and where all the best things found in the ruins are said to be deposited. Unfortunately the priests who attend to them were absent, and we could not (or at least did not) get in, though Stanhope showed his agility by climbing in at an open window, and would have opened the doors from within if we had not feared a scandal. The French call this site that of the Temple of *Æsculapius*; but the consul says that is not the general opinion of antiquarians. We went on to the great cisterns, which supplied this part of the city with water. There are some still larger ones on the side near the Goletta, which we afterwards visited; and many of the houses had cisterns of their own. The cisterns were supplied by an aqueduct of some 50 miles in length, of which there are many traces, and which is said to be quite perfect for several miles of its course; but in Carthage itself the remains are very shattered. The great features of the place are: 1. The much larger extent of the city than I had in the least expected; 2. The great beauty of the situation; 3. The utterness of the destruction of every building of any sort or kind, except the remains of the cisterns and some traces of an amphitheatre. The ground for miles is covered with stones, the *débris* of the ruins—but it is but the shadow of a shade that remains of Carthage itself.

“The consul took us to see his own country-house—very charming; and showed us some of the palaces of magnates, including that of the Bey himself. He praised the Tunisians; but he is such an Arab himself that he was sure to do this. He said there had been great sympathy with Arabi, and that if he had escaped from Egypt and reached Ben Ghazi, the whole of the north of Africa would have been in flames. The game is now considered to be up; but the English are less popular here than they used to be. The French, he thought, were not likely to attempt the annexation of Tunis, but they were trying in every possible way to extend their influence and to exclude other countries. It would suit them very well that there should be occasional troubles, which would demonstrate the feebleness of the Bey's government.

"*Jan. 1.*—We all wished one another a happy New Year. It opens with a most lovely day, very bright and rather fresh. The consul says rain is much wanted, and the season is exceptionally dry. We cannot bring ourselves to regret this as we ought.

"The younger members went on shore and had rather a tiring day. They brought back the news of Gambetta's death. Lady Northcote and I remained quietly on board, and read Chaucer and a little Italian collection of popular stories which we got at Palermo, and which is curious as showing the bitter anti-aristocratic feeling of the Sicilians."

January 6th found them at Syracuse about 8.30.

"Just as we had finished breakfast came the health officer and doctor, who would not give us *pratique* till the whole of our party had been paraded before them. Lady Northcote had to put hasty finishing touches to her toilet, in order to display herself. They departed satisfied. The vice-consul (M. Pisani) then came on board, having already sent my letters, but none for any other of our party. In the course of conversation I mentioned Stanhope, when he immediately remembered that a packet had come for him; and then I mentioned Mr Smith, when it appeared that he had letters for him which had been waiting eight or nine months!

"After luncheon we took a couple of carriages, and, declining the assistance of a guide, started for Epipolæ and Euryelus, where we were rewarded by a magnificent view of Etna, Hybla, and the northern part of the island, and of the great harbour, Ortygia, Achradina, and other well-known scenes of the great Athenian siege. Harry, Stanhope, and Helen made a short cut on foot, rejoining the road near Timoleon's Villa, where we had left one of the carriages to wait for them. We were struck with the more flourishing appearance which the people here present than that of the Palermitans.

"*Jan. 7 (Sunday).*—Service on board. After luncheon went on shore, and saw the fountain Arethusa (either a natural spring of fresh water within 9 or 10 feet of the sea, or a basin supplied by a submarine shaft connected with the aqueducts of Achradina), the cathedral (with

some traces of the old temple of Minerva), and the museum."

On the 12th they visited Messina, and some of the party viewed the ancient theatre at Taormina. Rain now gave place to the fine dust of the *sirocco*.

From Naples they made an excursion to Pompeii, and soon after cruised to Mentone.

"*Jan. 30.*—On our way back we came across a French cavalry drill, and were much struck by a new method of dismounting. Each trooper threw his left leg forwards over the saddle, turned so as to sit sideways on the off side of the horse, then threw up his legs, *turned a somersault backwards*, and alighted on his feet on the near side. Lady Northcote holds that all this drilling means that France is preparing for war. All of us went on shore for a walk after luncheon."

Friday the 5th was their last day on board, and they were at home on the 10th, after a rather unlucky cruise, as far as weather was concerned.

The next diary is the story of a trip less pleasant and stormy in its way, a political tour in North Ireland, in the autumn of 1883. Sir Stafford's own version may be given first as it appears in his journal, with additions from his speeches, and from other accounts.

"*Aug. 24, 1883.*—Came home to Pynes after the practical close of a very tame and unsatisfactory session. We have not found much benefit from the new Rules of Procedure, except possibly in the working of the Grand Committees—or at least of one of them, for the Law Committee was rather a failure. The Bankruptcy Bill has been well discussed, and the House have accepted the work of the Grand Committee with little debate except on the question of the extension of the bill to Ireland. It remains to be seen what other measures can be dealt with in the same way; probably not many. As regards the behaviour of members in the House itself, the less said the better. The Government have not distinguished themselves much. The Agricultural Holdings Bill is rather a sham, which will do little good or harm. What will come out of the Corrupt Practices Bill is a question. It will render it

necessary for us to develop voluntary action much more than has yet been done, for there will be little money to spare for paid agents.

"The foreign and colonial questions left in a state of confusion are (1) Egypt; (2) Suez Canal; (3) South Africa, comprising the Transvaal and Bechuanaland, the Basutos and the Zululand difficulties; (4) Madagascar, the treatment of Consul Pakenham, the arrest and detention of Mr Shaw the missionary, and the insult offered to Captain Johnstone and the Dryad; (5) the Congo; (6) Afghanistan, and the subsidy to the Ameer Abdul-Rahman; (7) the New Guinea annexation.

"*Aug. 31.*—Letters from Lord A. Hill and Lord Rossmore, who want me to visit and speak at Monaghan. I must not, however, undertake any more Irish work. Dublin will be affronted as it is. Note Parnell's speech, reported in papers of yesterday. His moderation is ominous, and prepares one for some fresh 'transaction' on the part of the Government. It would be unpolite to say that it points to a new treaty of Kilmainham. But the Gladstonian legislation for Ireland is Danaidal. Note Bright's speech at opening coffee-house at Birmingham, and his suggestion that the excise duties collected within the municipality should be handed over to its management.

"*Sept. 1.*—News of young Lowther's victory in Rutland. Very satisfactory, as showing the temper of the farmers, and administering a snub to Mr James Howard and the Farmers' Alliance. Letter from —, deprecating my visit to Belfast as likely to affront and alienate the Catholics, by indicating an exclusive alliance with Orangeism. Told him I hoped he would find himself mistaken; that I wanted to infuse a rather more imperial spirit into the party, and to draw them a little away from the disputes among themselves to the great questions which affect the whole empire. Undeveloped Conservatism needs to be fostered into life. Great interests at stake, equally dear to Catholics and Protestants. Parnellites the common enemy, and manner in which present Government has dealt with them makes me very suspicious of further concessions.

"*Sept. 4.*—Read Fawcett's pamphlet on State Socialism and Nationalisation of the Land. Very good and suggestive. Perhaps a little too adverse to the principle of State aid; but that is necessarily so in an attempt to check the spread of dangerous doctrines. He is champion, ἐπὶ τὸ κάμνον.

"*Sept. 5.*—Wet day. Went to meet of the stag-hounds. But it was too wet to make a ride on the hills pleasant; so Fortescue and I rode home again, leaving the huntsmen to enjoy themselves as they might. They did little; and Ebrington is growing impatient to kill a few more stags, as they are increasing too much, and doing damage to the farmers. As we got near home, my horse came down with me, and broke her knee rather badly. We were on level ground, and going quite gently. I was not hurt, except for a little sprain of the back.

"Note Hartington's speech at Sheffield, and good article upon it in this day's 'Standard.' Note also Chamberlain's short letter to the Battersea Radical Association. 'I have always assumed that the first step in the direction of reform would be an assimilation of the county and borough franchise. Public opinion must ripen considerably before it would be possible for any Government to go further, and the final settlement of the franchise question must of necessity be postponed until there is evidence of a general agreement on the subject.' Compare this with the 'daring duckling's' speech at the Cobden Club dinner, and contrast with Hartington's.

"*Sept. 20.*—Started for cruise in Pandora [to Ireland ultimately]. J. S. N. and Hilda, Fred and Margaret Shelley, Frank Farrer, and Lady Susan Fortescue went with me to Dartmouth, or rather to King's Wear, where we found the boat waiting to take us on board.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 2.*—A deputation from the County and City Conservative Association came on board before breakfast and presented an address. I express my regret at not being able to visit Dublin on this occasion. Hope to do so another time. A few words of encouragement. Start for Belfast by two o'clock train, Tottenham with me. Ladies, with Fred and Frank, remain on board. Jack is on his

way, *via* Greenore, to Belfast. At Portadown, and again at Lisburn, there are deputations with addresses, to which I make brief replies. Reach Belfast about 6.30, and find ourselves in a whirlpool of excitement. Fearful crush at the station, through which Sir T. Bateson and Lord Arthur Hill with difficulty get me to the carriage.

"Everybody, however, is disappointed at my not having come by sea and landed at Carrickfergus, where thousands of people had assembled to meet me, and to make a triumphal entry into Belfast. We drove round some of the streets of Belfast to see the decorations, and then out to Belvoir, where a deputation met us at the gates of the park and brought us to the house.

"Oct. 5.—Began by receiving deputations from the Odd-fellows, and from the advocates of Women's Suffrage. Then drove to Carrickfergus, the road by which we ought to have come on our arrival. Lunched with Mr Greer, M.P., were photographed, visited the Castle, and stone on which King William landed. Came back to Belfast in the Pandora, which had taken a certain number of the party down to Carrick. This evening was the unlucky torchlight procession, which was organised in spite of remonstrance from Sir T. Bateson and myself. It was generally well conducted as far as its members went; but some of the lower people and boys attracted by it were rather riotous, and some windows were broken, both at the newspaper offices (both sides) and at a convent where the Lady Superior was actually dying. There is no reason to suppose that her death was in any degree accelerated by the disturbance, or that she was even conscious of it. But the circumstance will be much magnified by our opponents; and it is an illustration of the mischief of these processions.

"Oct. 6 (*Saturday*).—Most of our party went in after breakfast to attend the laying of the first stone of the new Orange Lodge by Lady Crichton. It had been suggested that I should be asked to do this; but I had prevented the request from being made, as I was most anxious to avoid giving an Orange character to my visit. It has, however, been impossible to keep clear of that character. Orangemen have crowded round me everywhere. Their

bands and scarves have been conspicuous in all the meetings. It would have been impossible to repel them, and serious injury might have been done had I attempted it. Waterford, Jack, and I started late from Belvoir, and drove to the Botanic Gardens, where an enormous crowd had assembled. There were probably about 40,000 people present and within sight of the hustings. As to the hearing our speeches, the less said the better; for in addition to the difficulty of the numbers, we had to contend with the various Orange bands and their music. After the meeting we went with the Duke of Abercorn, the young Hamiltons, Crichtons, Tottenham, Macartney, Ion Hamilton, King Harman, Somerset Maxwell, and the Batesons, to Baron's Court. Several addresses were presented at different stations. Between Dungannon and Pomeroy a stone was thrown at the train, which broke the window of the compartment next our own, and struck Lady Crichton sharply on the back. She was a good deal hurt, though not seriously injured. We arrived at Newtown Stewart, and were escorted from the station through the town by a torchlight procession and band, organised by Captain Maturin. We reached Baron's Court late, and found the Duchess, Lady Lansdowne, Lady Blandford, Lord and Lady Winterton, Lady G. Hamilton waiting dinner. Hasty toilet. Pleasant, reposeful evening.

"Oct. 7 (*Sunday*).—Drove to church in the morning. Jack assisted rector (Mr Winn) in the service. Walked back, and after luncheon took a walk with the Duke and Duchess round the garden and up to the home-farm. Very much charmed by the whole family.

"Oct. 8.—Drove with the Duke to see some of the neighbouring farms. Returned to late luncheon. Went out to play at salmon-fishing, but without result. On the following day there was an enthusiastic meeting at Newtown Stewart. Coleraine was visited on the 10th, and the Giant's Causeway on the 11th. On the two following days there were more orations, the 14th was Sunday, and a blessed day of rest.

"Oct. 15.—A wet wild morning. It cleared a little before the time came for our landing, but was still so

bad as to make us abandon the attempt to land at the outer steps of the pier, where great preparations had been made for our reception. We rowed to the inner steps, and hastened to the hotel (Olderfleet), where I first received, and replied to, several addresses, then lunched with a large party and made them a speech, and then 'said a few words' to the people outside. I believe all this failed to satisfy them for my not having landed on the red cloth under their arch, and listened to the addresses given from a sort of pulpit erected for their better delivery. Drove out to Magheramorne (Sir J. M. Hogg's) where again a band, an address, and some more 'few words.' In the house, besides the family, including A. Saumarez and wife, were Mr and Lady Mary Cooke and Mr Des Graz.

"Oct. 16.—Tullymore is certainly one of the most beautiful places I have seen. We had first a charming walk by the river-side, and then a drive among the woods, before luncheon. Afterwards we drove to Castle Wellan (Lord Annesley's) where we were to have stayed, but had found it necessary to give up our engagement. Lord Annesley met us at his garden gate, showed us some of his planting, and made me put in a tree. Then he drove us round his beautiful lake, and brought us back to tea. Back to Tullymore to dinner.

"Oct. 17.—Started about eleven to drive across the Mourne Mountains to Rosstrevor, where the yacht had been sent to wait for us. It was a striking drive through a wild country. The chief properties through which we passed were Lord Roden's, Lord Annesley's, Lord Downshire's, and Lord Kilmorey's. The houses on Lord Roden's and Lord Downshire's estate seemed superior to the others. We noticed a large number of unroofed and deserted cottages, which the driver told us had belonged to men who had sold their tenant-right and emigrated. Lord Roden afterwards told me that this was a beneficial process, so long as the landlord had a voice in the matter, for he could put two or three evacuated holdings together, and make adequately large ones of them. But under the new Land Act he can do nothing, and

what happens is that the more energetic man sells his tenant-right to the less energetic, emigrates much to his own advantage, but leaves Ireland all the worse off for the exchange."

The rest of the Irish diary merely records movements in the direction of Wales, where he had to attend meetings. A more complete view of the Irish tour, and of Sir Stafford's speeches there, may be gleaned from the following incidents.

I wish [writes Mr John Northcote to Lady Northcote, on October 4] you could have seen the greeting which my father received. They yelled and screamed with delight, and rushed at him the moment he got out of the train, and pushed and crowded and fought to get near him, until I really began to be afraid he would be hurt in the crowd; but Lord Arthur Hill got behind him, and kept them off, and we slowly struggled through to the carriage, —one man patting him vigorously on the shoulder, and crying, "Hurrah! you're the boy." Then we drove about amidst a continuous crowd of shouting, enthusiastic working men, and finally came out here just in time for dinner.

Sir Thomas Bateson had made a mistake, for he had invited enormous crowds to meet my father at Carrickfergus, and in the city, in the morning, and had not told my father, and so they all missed seeing him. Many had come from great distances, and many workshops had a whole holiday—and so people were very angry, and inclined to blame my father for not coming; but I am happy to say I have put a considerable number of them right about the matter. The town is much decorated, and among the placards there is one I particularly like, which is "Our Leaders—Northcote and Salisbury." Father was in very low spirits the first evening, but he is more cheerful now, and keeps very well, although they keep him hard at it. He made a capital speech yesterday.

"They say I did well yesterday. I was only moderately satisfied," says Sir Stafford. From Belfast, as we have seen, he went to the Duke of Abercorn's, at Baron's Court, Newtown Stewart. He received deputations of Oddfellows. "You are the best British baronet that ever crossed the Channel," their spokesman said. A deputation of "strong-minded women" was also received—a trying encounter for any man. A big blue banner

was raised in welcome, with the legend, "Long live Sir Stafford Northcote, the Opponent of Atheism"—a rather unexpected theological testimony.

At 'Derry their "marvellous reception" was tempered very much by regret for some local window-breaking by roughs at Belfast, which had a melancholy sequel. The Lady Superior of the convent assaulted by the mob died: she was dying when the disturbance began, and may never even have been aware of the riot. But the event was terribly painful. Such are the doings of mobs, however loyal. "The window-breaking," says Sir Stafford, "was not done by any of the procession; but of course the procession led to the crowd of idlers who actually did it, and I am very unhappy about it." This led to the low spirits which made him at one time doubtful of his own success. The enthusiasm of Coleraine and Larne failed to cheer him much. "However, I believe I have done some good," he adds, on mature reflection.

In his speech at Belfast (October 4), he made the following remarks on the policy of Mr Parnell and Mr Gladstone, with a humorous and too appropriate illustration:—

There is a tendency on the part of Mr Parnell's party to draw towards Mr Gladstone's party and the Liberal Government, and to endeavour by association with them to gain something which will forward their object. I can well believe that between the skill and patience of Mr Parnell and his readiness to accommodate himself to the peculiar weakness and characteristics of the Prime Minister, the Government may be led into concessions which may be enlarged into measures of a fatal character; but remember this, whatever blows Mr Parnell strikes he strikes not a particular institution, but at the English connection altogether. I do not know that it would be fair to claim for Mr Parnell community with the great leaders of the Irish people centuries ago. There is a story told of the Earl of Kildare, who, in the reign of Henry VII. or VIII. was in arms against the British power, and who was particularly at enmity with the bishop of his diocese. The Earl burned down a church in the diocese, and when questioned afterwards, and asked how he could have done so horrid a thing as burn a church, he said he never would have done it if he had not thought the bishop was

inside. I believe the same is the case with Mr Parnell, and there are many institutions which he only attacks because he thinks that the British power is inside them. I hope that he may be frustrated in his attempts.

As to the *trop de zèle* which breaks the windows of quiet religious ladies, he had uttered his warning:—

I believe the time is coming and is not far distant when we shall be called upon to fight, not with our hands—as Irishmen are perhaps sometimes a little too ready to do—but with our voices, and our energy and our organisation at the poll, to which we shall have to go, and where that contest will be waged. Gentlemen, I hope you will keep your powder dry for the occasion; and when I say that, I do not speak literally with regard to powder, for I am told that I expose myself to being brought up under the Crimes Act for having used such a word. I speak metaphorically, and I say you must keep yourselves ready. Your oratory, your eloquence, your zeal in fighting your battle, you must keep ready to use when the moment for action comes, as come it will. . . . But remember, *no offence against those who differ from you*, no offence that can give them an opportunity of complaining that you are yourselves breaking the law and the order which you profess to support; and don't forget that, though the great strength of our party may be amongst the northern Irishmen, and amongst those of whom I have been speaking, do not forget that they are by no means the whole strength of the Conservative and Union party throughout Ireland. Do not forget that there are others who, differing from you in not immaterial particulars, yet will be ready at the right time, ready to stand by the old cause. Do not forget to recognise all that is earnest and good in them. Do not forget, too, that they are the allies you must have if you wish to maintain that which is your true character, that which is the character of the true National party in this country. Do not allow yourselves to be lowered into a section, do not allow yourselves to be carried away by regard for mere sectional individual interests, but stand by the great cause, and stand by the old banner, and stand by it in company with those who are prepared to stand with you.

At Larne his remarks on the Land Act were assuredly not violent nor incendiary:—

But I am quite prepared to say that I consider the great principles upon which all legislation should be founded are the

principles of justice and fair treatment; and with regard to the Land Act in particular, I say that in so far as that Act was intended and framed for the purposes of giving proper security to the capital invested in the cultivation of land—now that I have seen something of the agriculture of this country, and what the conditions are under which that agriculture is conducted—I say that is a sound and right principle, and that everything should be done that can give fair encouragement and confidence to the tenant-farmers. At the same time that can only be done by doing justice to them, and doing it in such a way that you do no injustice to others. If it is to be in the nature of a boon to one class of those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits at the expense or with injustice to other classes—I care not whether those other classes be the owners of the land or the labourers on the land—if it is to be a measure pressed in that spirit, it will not succeed in the object aimed at, and there will not be the result which is desired from it. If there is a feeling that justice is being done to all, and done impartially, then I venture to think that we may expect better results from this sort of legislation. But here again is just one of those questions on which so much turns upon the administration. The value and importance of such legislation as contained in the Land Act does now greatly depend upon the method of its administration. It sometimes reminds me of the figure which was seen by the king in his dream, and which was expounded by the prophet—the figure which had feet partly of iron and partly of clay. The Land Act seems to me to rest on such a foundation, the question being whether you have got an iron and permanent footing, or a clay footing which will be carried away. So far as it is a measure of justice and equity, it rests upon iron; so far as it rests on injustice, it is a foot of clay, which will in time be carried away.

When once the Irish expedition was over, Sir Stafford's next task, following almost without a break, was a tour in gallant little Wales.

"Oct. 22 (*Monday*).—Evening meeting at Carnarvon. Drove there. Enthusiastic reception; but of course tame after Ireland. Spoke in the Pavilion to about 5000 or 6000. Thought to have done well and to have avoided treading on the toes of the moderate Liberals and Dissenters. There is a very up-hill battle to fight in Wales, but something to be done by showing the people what

Conservatism is. No Conservative of Cabinet rank had ever spoken in North Wales before, nor any one (except myself at Brecon) in South Wales. My own good reception was of course largely due to civility to a stranger; but Mr Douglas Pennant was warmly welcomed too, notwithstanding his having been told that no Welsh audience should ever listen to him again, on account of some remarks of his reflecting on the national character.

"Oct. 28-30.—Reflected on my expedition. I think it may fairly be called a successful one, though I do not share the enthusiasm with which some of our friends regard it. The amount of loyal feeling displayed in the north of Ireland was mainly due to causes unconnected with my visit, such as the growing irritation of the Orangemen, who thought themselves abandoned by the country to which they wished to remain united, the boastful language of the Parnellites, the Monaghan election (Healy), and the 'invasion of Ulster' at Dungannon and elsewhere. My presence was of the sort of use that a lightning-conductor is. It gave a comparatively safe means of escape to the electric fluid with which the air was heavily charged. I did what I could to direct the energies of our friends to the registration courts and the organisation committees. How far I have succeeded time must show. As regards other matters, it is possible that my visit may have added a little to the excitement, but it let off more steam than it generated; and a good deal of zeal was expended in cheering me which would otherwise have gone to breaking heads and discharging revolvers. On the whole a good stroke of work has been done, in showing England and the world that there is a party in Ireland heartily loyal to the Union.

"Nov. 3.—Elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, against G. O. Trevelyan and Professor Blackie. This seems to excite our friends very much, and I suppose it has a good appearance, which is a good thing for the party."

Whether the appointment was or was not a good thing for the party, for the University of Edinburgh it was a good thing. The rectors of the Scottish universities have

not, as a rule, very much to do. They are represented by an assessor in the councils of the College, and their chief functions are to give a prize, to utter a speech—and, above all, to be elected. The constituency is the students, and they get an extraordinary amount of entertainment from the struggle. There is usually a Liberal party, a Conservative party, and an Independent party among them, but the latter seldom carries its man. The others select some celebrated persons, often not unconnected with letters, and they canvass, and intrigue, and expend their wealth on printing pamphlets and squibs. Many meetings are held, much young rhetoric bubbles over, and not infrequent peas and other missiles are thrown about. But the essence of the election is usually political, though it would be difficult to name the party which Mr Carlyle, for example, represented. The rectorship gives eminent men a title not to be disdained, and brings them pleasantly into contact with the young. During Sir Stafford's tenure of this office he had far more work to do than commonly falls to Lord Rectors, for the Tercentenary of Edinburgh University was celebrated in the spring of 1884 with much festivity, and in the presence of many distinguished aliens. The Principal, at that time, was the late Sir Alexander Grant, editor of the 'Ethics of Aristotle.' He had just written a history of the University, the youngest in Scotland. In the Rector and the Principal this Alma Mater was peculiarly lucky, for no two men could have been found better qualified to grace the ceremony and to please and charm the visitors from abroad. But this is anticipating. Sir Stafford went to Edinburgh on January 29, 1884, and it is understood that he grumbled less than Mr Carlyle did of the discomforts attending the journey. The collar of his shirt may have been blackened in the train, as Mr Carlyle complained in his own case with much vigour of invective. The new Lord Rector did not think it necessary to mention this detail; but he did "expect fun from the symposium to-morrow." He was warmly welcomed by the students, on this or another occasion, at a social gathering, where he told some of his Devonshire stories. In his rectorial ad-

dress he discouraged the tendency of literary persons to abstain from political life. The students in Scotland do not carry to that pitch their exclusive devotion to letters. "With us the object of the University is not merely to protect scholars, but to form citizens." Turning to the studies of the place, he denied that the time spent on the classics was time wasted :—

No doubt there have been many young men who, when they came to compete in the examination halls, or still more in the actual walks of life, with contemporaries prepared upon a different system, have felt an inferiority in practical and directly useful knowledge, which has placed them at a considerable disadvantage. But for all that, there is in the old learning a charm which carries us away from the bonds and fetters of the workaday world, refreshes us when we are weary, elevates us when our aims are sinking, cheers us when we are despondent, calms us when we are agitated, moderates our minds and thoughts, alike when we are in prosperity and in adversity, sets before us high examples of courage and patience and wisdom and unselfishness, and does us, too, the inestimable service of renewing in our own hearts the memories of our nobler though probably less practical selves—such as we were when we began to look eagerly forward to the race in which we had not yet engaged, and which we have since found so absorbing of our energies.

He ventured on a defence of Greek literature; not unnecessary, for apparently universities will soon need to be told that screws, iron plates, chemistry, and the development of the electric light of the streets, are not the only things worth study—that the best words and thoughts of an age which cared for none of those things are also worth attending to. Greek is in a tottering condition, not for lack of the best of teachers at Edinburgh, but because Greek is thought, here, as in America, not to be "practical," not actual enough. It was thus that Sir Stafford commended a kind of learning which, if not practical, is disinterested, and if not actual, forces us to say, "So much the worse for minds to which it seems lacking in actuality" :—

It might be said of the best period of Athenian history, that it was a democracy tempered by comedies; and what comedies

they are! It is not easy to convey to you young men any adequate idea of the delight with which, when one is wearied with long sittings in the House of Commons, one takes up the 'Knights' or the 'Clouds'; and then there is the more serious tragic poetry, which, while it tells the tale of Grecian thought and breathes the spirit of the Grecian muse, opens to us from time to time the depths of the universal poetry of mankind, and startles us at moments with its religious, its almost Christian sentiments. When we listen to the noble pleading of Antigone, her piety towards her brother, her resolution to obey the higher law of God rather than the law which condemns her to die for the discharge of a sister's duty, and her somewhat haughty refusal to allow her younger sister to involve herself in her fate, we feel as if we had before us one who might fitly take rank with Shakespeare's Isabella, nay, whom I would not hesitate to place above her for dignity and greatness of character, even though there are wanting in the older play those more distinctly Christian touches like the celebrated passage that "all the souls that are, were forfeit once," which gives to 'Measure for Measure' its chief flavour of superiority.

The Rectorial address was very much liked, but the Lord Rector's hardest holiday work had to come. On April 16 he was again in Edinburgh, at the assembly which gathered to celebrate the Three Hundred Years' life of "The Town's College," for Edinburgh University is civic, and owes nothing to popes and saints.

Sir Stafford briefly described the scene to Lady Northcote:—

Just a line to say it is hopeless to think of writing. Yesterday was a very striking though tiring day. I wish you could have seen the congregation of all manner of gowns and hoods which assembled in the old Parliament House and formed the procession to the old Cathedral of St Giles, which has now been very well restored. I have ordered a 'Scotsman' for each day, so you will get the account. I struck work after the evening reception, and declined to go to the ball. The M——'s are most kind and considerate—and don't ignore the "cravings of youth." But it is an advantage to be with people who can sympathise with the infirmities of age. "Si jeunesse savait," they wouldn't overwork me, and "si vieillesse pouvait," they could not; for I am very anxious to do all they ask. I hope to be of some use in the

matter of their meeting the foreign delegates on Friday, which they could not well have managed without me. I went to their dramatic performance for part of the time. They had taken too heavy a piece in the version of 'Nigel,' but had got it up well, and the man who acted Trapbois was really clever.

Though he talked lightly of *la vieillesse*, he really was beginning to feel hard work of this kind as a strain. He had almost given up shooting, for which, perhaps, he never greatly cared; and his Irish tour, though it did not actually harm his health, had warned him that he might be over-wearied. This is recognised in the following letter of April 18, describing a beautiful and interesting ceremony. When collegiate people do dress in their academic best, and when the variegated hoods of a hundred colleges are displayed, the scene proves that men of peace can be almost as gorgeous, and "in their attire do show their wit" as magnificently, as men of the sword. This was the most magnificent academic festival which has been held for very many years; and with the old grey Grassmarket and St Giles' for a background to the reds and blues and greens of the robes, Edinburgh needed not to fear rivalry with Bologna.

The best thing is that I hope to be with you on the same day with this letter. Look out for me (or my exhausted carcass) by the train reaching King's Cross at seven.

Yesterday was a very remarkable day. I wish you could have seen the sight in the great hall where the degrees were conferred. The masses of colour were quite like a flower-bed, and the ladies in the gallery must have been much exercised between admiration and jealousy. Some of the French robes were the most striking. The banquet was less gay, as gowns were not worn; but it was a most striking sight. To-day is my day. I am just going to hold an assembly of the students, to give them their turn of the great gathering. They are very much pleased, and I hope will forgive my not going to the ball on Wednesday. There is their symposium in the evening. Altogether it will be as hard as any day we have had.

Now I must go. The M——'s are very kind, though the N——'s think they keep me away from the festivities too much. I should die under the energetic system; as it is, I can only just get along.

In his speech at the Tercentenary he made one of the classical allusions in which he excelled:—

I feel assured that this University is destined to exhibit in its future career the same high qualities which it has exhibited hitherto. I was staying a very short time ago in an old house in the country that belonged to the family of the Mores. There were badges upon the walls, and the badge was the mulberry-tree—the *morus*; and this was the inscription: "*Morus tarde moriens, morum cito moritur*"—The mulberry-tree is slow in death, the mulberry fruits die quickly; and so it may be with us and all of this University. The individuals may pass away, but the stock will remain. It is a consolation which all who are connected with such a body as this may take to themselves, that though the work they do in this life may be short, and the art may seem to be long in comparison, though their life is short, the life of the body to which they belong is not short; and we may fully trust and believe that the future of this University will be connected, and will be proudly connected, with the history of our country and the prosperity of the English nation.

Edinburgh never in the illustrious roll of her Lord Rectors had one more popular, one who better graced a graceful office, than Sir Stafford. He visited Scotland again in the autumn of 1884. He voyaged along the beautiful west coast in Mr Smith's yacht, the *Pandora*, which had frequently, and with great benefit to his health, been placed at his service. His best holidays were due to the kindness of Mr Smith. At Glasgow he had rather more publicity than he liked. He writes from Oban: "One enthusiastic gentleman came and talked to me at the station, expressing his great disappointment that there were not more people there to see me off. I had a newspaper correspondent who came and seated himself by my side at breakfast, and interviewed me so energetically that I cut short my meal."

Such are the holidays of the conspicuous: and even at a Scotch breakfast the interviewer comes with the porridge and stays till the marmalade. They saw Iona in the wet (there are English people who complain that the west coast is wet; it is not nearly wet enough for salmon and sea-trout), and they beguiled time at Tobermory with

readings from "The Lord of the Isles," and, less appropriately, from Mr Mallock. In Glencoe, too, it rained; but the glories of the Sunbeam, Lord Brassey's gorgeous yacht, were viewed and admired at Oban. On beholding this portent the muse awoke—as well she might; for, since the Sicilian tyrant's days, or the seafaring of Cleopatra, never was there a barque like the Sunbeam—and Sir Stafford's hand touched the lyre of Ingoldsby.

It had poured at Oban, it streamed at Strome;
 When we tried to go out the rain drove us home;
 At Tobermory it was still the same story,
 And at Ballachulish it made us feel foolish;
 But when we had reached the magnificent Strome

Ferry,
 We saw a sight
 Which made us quite
 Merry;
 Very.

We saw a vessel of brilliant whiteness,
 And a company bowing with great politeness,
 And we shaded our eyes
 In glad surprise,
 And said to one another, "Now what's to be done?
 That's the Sun-
 Beam.

How bright it doth seem!
 And who's on board?
 Why, upon my word,
 When I look again, how silly I am
 Not to have known Sir Willyam

Harcourt,
 Pride of the Home Office and the Bar Court;
 And there as I reckon,
 Beginning to beckon,
 Is Mr Gwynne Holford, late member for Brecon."
 But oh! what an outburst of welcome broke from us,
 When there came to our gangway a boat with Sir Thomas

Brassey,
 With many a lady and laddie and lassie!
 It was quite "too too" with "How d'ye do?"
 And in such a blare of universality,
 We seem to lose individuality,
 While never was known such hospitality.
 They asked us to dinner, they asked us to tea.
 "But nothing of that sort will do," said we;
 "This night we have marked for a musical swarry,
 And to disappoint our crew we'd be sorry.

We've the Well of St Keyne, and the Nancy Brig,
And Miss Mabel is ready to play us a jig ;
But if you'll allow us, your sails being furled,
We will visit the vessel that went round the world."
But oh ! how Columbus and Francis Drake
With envy in their graves must shake !
And sure the ship Argo had ne'er such a cargo ;
Nor that which was built in Sicilian waters
For the ancient tyrant, his sons and his daughters,
Which had gardens and bowers, and goldfish and flowers.
No ; nothing can match the Sunbeam gay,
Or the notes that people its brilliant ray.
There are schoolrooms and smoking-rooms, bedrooms and baths,
With hot and cold water turned on ;
And we wander through passages, doorways, and paths,
Till we can't make out where we are gone.
Through dining-room, drawing-room, boudoir, and study,
I pass till my brain is quite mixed up and muddy ;
With silk and with satin and velvet arrayed,
And china and shell-work and ivory displayed—
Gifts from this Royal Prince, or that Maori chief,
And from Japs and Chinese : it was quite a relief
To escape from such splendour, and, wiping my pen,
To sit down in the dear snug Pandora again.

From Oban they sailed north, by the cliffs and mouldering castles—

" Each on its own dark cape reclined,
And listening to its own wild wind "—

and they stayed at Dunvegan. Here they were on familiar ground, and saw familiar sights,—Flora Macdonald's stays, the sword of Rory More, and the mysterious Fairy Flag, which brings victory to the Macleods.

Early in September they sailed south, and, after a few brief visits to Stobo, Pitlour, and other houses, Sir Stafford went to Hopetoun and made Conservative speeches at a Conservative gathering. The Provost of Edinburgh, although a Liberal, met him at luncheon at the Conservative Club, and took him to view Heriot's Hospital, the foundation of "Jingling Geordie." Sir Stafford visited Dalkeith stayed at Birnam, at St Mary's Tower, and then crossed the Tweed.

He had a great deal of political work in Scotland, late

in 1885, after an official visit to Balmoral. Staying at Blythswood he spoke at Glasgow: "It was an enthusiastic lively audience, sometimes a little noisy, but very good-humoured. The most striking thing was the way they cheered Lord Beaconsfield's name. It was an interruption of quite two minutes." He was nervous at having to speak in a hall built specially for Mr Gladstone, whose voice fills a very considerable amount of hall. Next year, in June, he spoke on the Union with Ireland, at Paisley. In September he visited Balmoral, and this was the last time he crossed the Border, or saw the heather, of which Sir Walter Scott said that if he did not see it every year he thought he should die. For Sir Stafford, holidays and work were very nearly over: he had one last trial to bear, and then his earthly task was done.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

It has been seen that, on the defeat of Mr Gladstone's Government in 1885, and the accession of Lord Salisbury's short-lived Cabinet, Sir Stafford Northcote went to the House of Lords with the title of Earl of Iddesleigh, and with the office of First Lord of the Treasury. As he said later, when a splendid testimonial was offered him by members of both parties, in March 1886, "For thirty years the House of Commons was his home." Thirty years see, in most cases, the life's work of a man; for him little more was left of life and work. "The House of Commons was his love, that was the place his heart went out to, and he could not get rid of his feelings. He always knew that he should greatly feel leaving the House of Commons, and he could only say that he had felt the separation a great deal more than he had thought he should." His departure was not, one may venture to say, of benefit to his party, nor to the House. An admi-

rable example of patriotic conduct and courtesy was lost, where it could ill be spared. One of the last barriers to partisan rancour was removed. Even the official journals of his party felt and deplored the loss and the change. For his own part, Lord Iddesleigh was at once engaged in the kind of work which he had often done so well; he presided over the Commission which examined into the Depression in Trade. This Commission was appointed by the Conservatives as soon as they came into office, in 1885. Its report, or rather its reports, were not issued till a few days after its President's death in 1887. Lord Iddesleigh's unrivalled financial experience, and the sagacity of his views on trade, naturally marked him out as the President.

The Commission was doubtless appointed for a political reason. The "bad times" since 1875 had, as we have seen, been pretty freely attributed to the Tories. The justice of these charges we have examined: they were partly superstitious, an affair of belief in luck, partly they rested on the foreign policy of Mr Disraeli's Government. It has been said that another foreign policy might have avoided certain expenses; but no policy could have altered the general conditions which depress business. There were Conservatives, however, who believed in "fair trade," in a commercial league between England and her colonies, and in other specifics. It was well, at least, to hear what they had to say, and to collect information. "One-sided free trade" was being denounced, not unnaturally; but Lord Iddesleigh had never any confidence in the talk about reciprocity. The reciprocity that was wanted was what could not be got, he said, and what could be got was not reciprocity. Still, the Conservatives were expected to do *something*, and they could, and did, appoint a Commission. Lord Iddesleigh was not ill pleased to be at its head. He saw that all the remedies put forward were more or less modified forms of protection. He foresaw that the Commission, or the majority of it, would find that the depression had been exaggerated, and that the results of the inquiry would, in the long-run, be favourable to free trade. He did the work

with his usual energy and conscientiousness. It was long and even laborious, ending much as he had expected. The report of the majority, drawn up by Lord Idlesleigh but issued after his death, found that trade, since 1875, might fairly be called depressed. There was a diminution of profit and of employment. This was caused by over-production, by "appreciation" of gold, by restrictive foreign tariffs, by foreign competition in all markets, and, among other things, by our defective education, both technical and financial. The civilised nations, in short, are now engaged, as never before, in a struggle for existence. England was the first earnestly industrial people: for long we had a kind of monopoly of trade. But in the last forty years most of Europe has taken to making things to sell. It is not so much that we make things worse than we did, as that every one can make them as well, and often more cheaply. The struggle for the cheap produces cheapness, and that is depression, or part of it. There is, to be sure, the consolation that the poor can get more for their money; no great comfort when, for want of employment, they have no money. The state of agriculture is notorious. "Sir James Caird estimates the loss in the purchasing power of the classes engaged in agriculture at £42,800,000 during the year 1885," a calculation which means incalculable misery and peril. The majority did not think that legislative restrictions on labour, and that strikes, had "materially affected the general prosperity of the country." They did not believe in longer hours of work as a remedy, and "feel satisfied that public opinion in this country would not accept any legislative measure tending to an increase in the present hours of labour." Legislation is likely to be in the contrary direction. They believed that the condition of the working classes had been immensely improved in the last twenty years: the share of labour in wealth was greater than it had been. But there would come a time, as profits fell and wages rose, when capital would be driven out of the field. What would happen then, the Commission did not prophesy. They did not blame, but rather praised, the trades-unions. They ad-

mitted, as well they might, that "the number of the unemployed is a matter of serious importance." They thought agriculture must be depressed "until the competition of soils superior to our own has been worked out." Profits would fall, till there was some corresponding expansion of trade, or "some destruction of wealth, such as is caused by a great war." We might seek new markets, and adapt our wares more to wants, and educate more, both technically and in the knowledge of foreign languages. They thought they were "encouraging a more hopeful view"; indeed, a minority of the Commission regarded theirs as too optimistic, and yet one thinks they had

"Close-lipped Patience for their only friend,
Sad Patience, too near neighbour of despair."

"If our position is to be maintained, it must be by the exercise of the same energy, perseverance, self-restraint, and readiness of resource by which it was originally created." Professor Bonamy Price, in the name of free trade, protested that "shorter hours of labour tax the community with dearer goods in order to confer special advantages on the working man. They protect him, and that is a direct repudiation of free trade."

This was the last heavy piece of official work which Lord Iddesleigh did, except at the Foreign Office, which he held from the end of July 1886 till Lord Salisbury took it. Among the "pantomimic changes" of his brief tenure of office, the most amazing was the kidnapping (August 21) of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria. But a brief reply to questions in the House of Lords was Lord Iddesleigh's only public remark on this occasion. His heavy work, on which, of course, it is not possible to comment here, was deeply interesting and even refreshing to him. He went up to town from Pynes at the very end of December 1886. Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer on December 23, from "a little temper on both sides," Lord Iddesleigh supposed (letter to Lady Iddesleigh, December 28, 1886). His own resignation followed shortly, in circumstances which shall be stated as shortly as possible.

On the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of Lord Randolph Churchill, Lord Salisbury entered into negotiations with Lord Hartington and the Liberal Unionists. Lord Iddesleigh, with his wonted unselfishness, placed his seat in the Cabinet at the Premier's disposal. On Tuesday morning the 4th of January he learned from an announcement in the newspapers that his offer had been accepted, and a telegram in cipher from Lord Salisbury reached Pynes in the afternoon of the same day. Mr Goschen had joined the Government, and in the course of the new combination Lord Salisbury found it desirable to go to the Foreign Office, Mr Smith giving up the War Office to become First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons. A letter to the same effect was received on the next morning. Lord Iddesleigh replied that he cheerfully accepted Lord Salisbury's decision. No proposal of another post had been made to him, and he regarded the transaction as completed. He then received a telegram, offering him the Presidency of the Council. Not being anxious "to have more political bother," immediately after resigning duties in which he was interested, he declined, and continued to decline after receiving "a kind letter from Lord Salisbury." To have accepted would have been to suggest various obvious misconstructions of his position, powers, and character. He hoped to be better able to serve his party outside than in a new office.

It is not correct to state, as was stated at the time, that Lord Iddesleigh's resignation was due to a consciousness of failing health. His old enemy, an affection of the heart, of thirty-six years' standing, was present with him; but the work he had done in the last two years had not brought it, as yet, prominently into his own notice. We have seen how busy he had been with speaking in many distant places, and in his canvassing tour in 1885 he often addressed large audiences in the open air and even in the rain. His work at the Commission on Trade kept him in town in 1885, till his visit to Balmoral, whence he went to speak at Aberdeen. He spoke later at various places, and his lecture at Edinburgh

on Desultory Reading (November 3) certainly gave no sign of failing power in body or mind. The year 1886 found him speaking at many public meetings, and a brief visit to Balmoral was almost his only holiday. He wound up the Trade Commission on December 8, and, as we saw, was busy in town at the end of that month. It was not till January 4, 1887, that he had a feeling of faintness on climbing the Castle Hill, when he was attending sessions at Exeter; but this attack seemed so unimportant that, in the afternoon, he attended an oratorio in a village near Pynes. All this distinctly shows that he had been in his usual health, and even more than usually active. Nor did the passing illness of January 4 at all give him cause for serious thought about his condition. After his resignation, on January 7, he presided over a large county meeting in Exeter, and spoke on the Prince of Wales's scheme of an Imperial Institute, in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee. He occupied this position as Lord Lieutenant of Devonshire, a post which he had held since January 1886. At the meeting which the Prince of Wales was to preside over in the following week, he was not destined to attend, though he set out for it. His work had ended ere he reached it. To be brief, his days were numbered; but he was unwarned of this, and felt full of power and readiness to work. All this is mentioned merely in contradiction of a report published in the 'Standard' of January 7, that Lord Iddesleigh was extremely ill and dejected, and suffered from the work of the Foreign Office. That he first heard of the change at the Foreign Office from the newspapers was a circumstance to be explained, no doubt, by clumsiness or haste, but it was a circumstance deeply to be regretted.

The sudden close of the life of Lord Iddesleigh is too familiar to need a long narrative. On January 11, he went up from Pynes to London, where he was to speak at the Mansion House on the Prince of Wales's scheme of an Imperial Institute. On the forenoon of the 12th of January, he went to the Foreign Office, and had a long talk with Sir James Fergusson, the Under-Secretary, to

whom he said that he hoped his separation from his old colleagues would not be permanent. He was to call again at 6 P.M., and see Mr H. M. Stanley about the expedition to relieve Emin Bey, in which he was much interested. He then walked across Downing Street, to see Lord Salisbury, at No. 10 in that street. On reaching the anteroom, he sank into a chair, where Mr Henry Manners and Lord Walter Gordon Lennox found him very ill, and breathing with difficulty. He never spoke again, and died at five minutes past three, in the presence of two doctors, of Lord Salisbury, and of Mr Henry Manners.

It was a death-scene brief and painless, "a sleep and a forgetting." He died at peace, but with his mind still busy about national affairs. The notes of the speech which he was never to deliver were found in his pocket, and among the notes a brief classical quotation, *India mittit ebur*; a trace of his old and dear studies. About such a death—a euthanasia to himself, a shock intolerable to his nearest survivors, a sorrow to the whole country—eloquence were impertinent. The day before he had said, about his official work, "I shall leave no arrears." His work was done, and well done.

" 'A very perfect, gentle knight,'
In fields whence Chivalry has fled :
He lived in honour's clearest light,
He lies with England's noblest dead." ¹

The regret for Lord Iddesleigh's death was universally felt, was universally expressed : by the Queen, with her usual warm sympathy ; by his countrymen of almost all ranks and creeds. At the same moment as the funeral rites were paid amongst those who had been most dear to him at his own village of Upton Pyne, services were held at Westminster Abbey, Exeter Cathedral, and St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, at which public men of all parties and professions paid their last tribute to the honoured statesman. He rests in the place he had chosen, by the church in which he had worshipped from the happy days of his boyhood, and which he loved as a part of his home.

¹ 'Daily News.'

CHAPTER XX.

LITERARY PURSUITS—DOMESTIC LIFE.

LORD IDDESLEIGH was one of those men of affairs, or of action, whom Nature has half intended to make book-worms or men of letters. As a boy, his relations remember that he had a favourite retreat under a tree, where he would take refuge when strangers came, happy, like Thomas à Kempis, *in angulo cum libello*. His father and grandfather would even implore one of his sisters to rout him from his "nook and his book,"¹ and make him play, or ride, or shoot. It was only in later life that he who had been famous as a rowing man attained respectable skill as a shot or a rider to hounds. In boyhood, field-sports came seldom between him and his books, and he practised with pleasure what he praised without paradox—the art of desultory reading. For the rector of a Scottish university to tell his undergraduates that they might read (as the Scotch laird swore) "at lairge," was rather a bold act. He likened himself to the Matinian bee, which in a desultory fashion "employs each shining hour," rather than to the soaring, and possibly singing, swan of Dirce. Neither in precept nor in practice did he "confound desultory work with idleness." He read much and in many directions, and in part perhaps, like Emerson and Dr Johnson, "with his fingers," because his active mind found repose as well as enjoyment in variety of study. The very word "desultory," as he mentioned in his address to the Edinburgh students, implies etymologically the leaping from one horse to another.

The steeds he rode in this light Numidian fashion were many. Theology, History, Poetry, the Drama, Romance, and Science were all in his stable. Like a true friend of books, he was no great lover of epitomes and "cribs." If he had not read the league-long Mahabharata and Ramayana, still less, if possible, had he improved his mind, as Sir

¹ In omnibus requiem quæsi sed non inveni nisi in noezkins ond boezkins.—A Kempis.

John Lubbock recommended, with Wheeler's condensations of these gigantic epics. It is odd to find him telling Sir John Lubbock, in a discussion of the "Hundred Best Books," that he has never read Marcus Aurelius. But the reason of this probably was that the Greek of the Stoic Emperor is crabbed and corrupt, and that Lord Iddesleigh had a scholarly dislike of translations. Now there is a medium between Emerson's belief that Plato is sufficiently Attic in the prose of Bohn, on one side, and a total rejection of "cribs" on the other. The New Testament we are mostly content to read in English, and probably there is no disgrace in preferring for everyday use the English of Mr Long and the anonymous translators of the eighteenth century to the Greek of Marcus Aurelius. But Lord Iddesleigh appears to have been of another mind, and scholars will be the last to condemn him unless they have written translations.

In the spirit of his own Edinburgh lecture, he renounced the idea of being a bookman like "our old giants of learning, of whose powers of reading we hear so much, and of whose powers of writing we see remaining so many substantial proofs." Only while reading ten or twelve hours a-day for his class, could he emulate the toil of Buchanan or Casaubon. But in that very period of solid study he read more novels than at any other time in his life. The man who worked through the 'Arabian Nights' during the evenings of the week when he was "in the Schools," gave proof of that mental activity which finds repose in variety of interest. But this is not desultory reading in any invidious sense.

There are people who will and must read, who, as Scott when a child defined the *dilettanti*, "will and must know everything." There are others to whom all reading is a task and a weariness. These two classes will never understand each other. Lord Iddesleigh was an excellent specimen of the first class. He read all round him; and his memory, which nearly equalled Macaulay's, enabled him to remember most of what he read. His reading was not, and could not be, "indolent reading": it flowed not idly and wastefully through his mind, but left a golden deposit

of knowledge, and of bright and apt illustrations. He could amuse and instruct his Edinburgh undergraduates with ancient instances from Seneca and Lucian, as easily as with anecdotes from Mr Pepys his Diary. He shared Mr Lowell's and Mr Matthew Arnold's distrust of new books, "which, like new bread, bring one to mental dyspepsia." Probably Lord Iddesleigh will remain one of the last of English statesmen who knew the literature of Greece and Rome widely and well. New times, new manners. Soon there will be no scholars but scholars by profession. The ancients, it seemed to our fathers, keep a school of taste and knowledge, because they reached the heights and depths of human wisdom by paths not ours, and in lives lived under very different conditions. To know the literature of Greece and Rome is to be wise with a threefold experience, the experience of many ages, of varying civilisations. This knowledge, too, should teach discretion and limit in style. Lord Iddesleigh usually kept in his pocket a small volume of one of the Greek or Roman writers. Like Cicero or Macaulay, he might have said that they were his companions by night, by day, in town and in the country. Perhaps from this constant companionship with the best minds and the best styles (the more impressive because foreign and old), he learned to shun fine writing, fine speaking, eloquence for the sake of sound, and parliamentary wit, which is apt to turn to waggery. It was his opinion that "funny speeches are not difficult to make, but it is difficult to make them and retain the respect of the hearers." The plain manner of Lord Iddesleigh, in writing and in speaking, seems to have been derived, then, from that sense of appropriateness which the classics ought to teach, though often they fail to teach it. In all his many letters he never makes a needless point; he never aims at literary brilliance; he never attempts display; he is never fantastic. This unusual sobriety may be partly due to a perpetual familiarity with what the classics teach, and what many of their assiduous readers fail to learn. Some of the most florid and "Asiatic" writers of our age are those to whom Greek is most familiar. They miss, with all

their ornament, what Lord Iddesleigh did not miss, the great and difficult lessons of Greece, the lessons of appropriateness, of moderation, and of dignity. To be sure it might be replied that moderation and dignity were not exactly the merits of Cicero, nor often of Demosthenes and Æschines, in their political harangues. We need not all be politicians; and those who are or who are not may still retire on Lord Iddesleigh's favourites, Sophocles and Shakespeare, Molière and Lucian, Rabelais and Sir Walter Scott.

In fiction, Lord Iddesleigh preferred Sir Walter to all others. Perhaps he too, like a living critic, thought 'Count Robert of Paris' better than any novel that has been written since. Almost the last exercise of his pen, in the days which preceded his death, was to jot down the heads of an Edinburgh lecture on the parallel characters in Sir Walter Scott. Almost the last book, perhaps the very last book, which he read with pleasure, was a volume that contains more of the spirit of Scott than any other in English fiction, Mr R. L. Stevenson's 'Kidnapped.' Lord Iddesleigh was a very warm admirer of Mr Dickens, and he did his best, but unavailingly, to make Mr Disraeli appreciate the fun of 'Pickwick.' On the other hand, Lord Iddesleigh had no sympathy with the works of Mr Thackeray. Nature has made many people Dickensites or Thackerayans, as we are all born either Aristotelians or Platonists, and they are few on whom our two great humorists shine like double stars, Gemini in the skies of literature.

It is no inconsiderable pleasure to a biographer, separated from the topic of his study by so many differences of life, interest, and habit, to find that in literature, at least, he and his hero are at one. If Scott was Lord Iddesleigh's favourite novelist, Molière was his favourite comedian. By "favourite" one means the comedian whom he chose out of all the world for his own delight, because Shakespeare is imposed upon all of us, no less by patriotism than by natural bent of taste. But in Shakespeare's comedies, the poetry, after all, outshines the humour and the wit. Molière's wit, let his most ardent English friends

confess, has little to dread from the competition of his poetry. As Lord Iddesleigh said, "Comedy has been defined as the *bienséance* of society," or rather as the humorous representation of that *bienséance*. Of the world's three chief comedians this narrow definition almost excludes Shakespeare, quite excludes Aristophanes, and is only filled by Molière.

A very fair idea of Lord Iddesleigh's literary taste and of his humour may be gathered from a correspondence between him and Sir John Lubbock in 1885. Sir John Lubbock was preparing his famed list of one hundred books, though why any one should select the best hundred, more than the best eleven, or the best thirty books, it is hard to conjecture. His list, at all events, he submitted to the criticism of Lord Iddesleigh, who decidedly preferred Theocritus (omitted) to Wake's 'Apostolic Fathers,' which was included by Sir John Lubbock. He confessed, as we have seen, his ignorance of Marcus Aurelius, of Wake, of Confucius, of the Indian epics, and of the 'Shahnameh.' He complained, on the other hand, that Livy, Tacitus, Lucretius, Ovid, Juvenal, and Chaucer were left out. Of Chaucer he says, "I really don't know a writer with so many charms, or one who so brings home to you the life of his day, or who touches the tender feelings so effectively, or who has such an eye for the beauties of nature." Perhaps it would be impossible to sum up Chaucer's merits more briefly. Of Lord Iddesleigh's own favourite things in literature, a list has been compiled by Lady Iddesleigh. If it be true that when one knows a man's literary friends—the bookish company he keeps—one knows the man, Lord Iddesleigh's character will stand high enough. Like Mr Gladstone, he was devoted to the "Divina Commedia" of Dante; unlike him, he thoroughly appreciated the creator of "Tartuffe." As he had a love of reading aloud, he perhaps took more pleasure than most people who are not poets in the Elizabethan drama, above all in Ford's "Broken Heart," which was an especial favourite, and which he could scarcely read without tears. He was devoted to Ben Jonson's "Volpone" and "Alchemist." Marlowe and Shakespeare did not,

in his mind, oust Sheridan and Goldsmith, and he knew by heart "Chrononhotonthologos," a great admiration of Sir Walter Scott's. Of Scott's novels he preferred the 'Antiquary,' where all were dear; and of Miss Austen, 'Pride and Prejudice.' Lamb and Crabbe were often in his hands; he was one of the last readers of Southey's "Thalaba," and he was familiar with the plays of Goethe, with Jean Paul Richter, Swift, and Sterne. I do not find that French literature attracted him much, except in the works of the most English-natured of Frenchmen, Molière and Rabelais, and in Sardou and Voltaire. His opinion of Tasso, of Homer, and of Pope's version of Homer, may be gathered from an interesting letter to Lady Northcote. Much as Scott, when, in his boyhood, he was called "the Greek dunce" at Edinburgh University, wrote an essay to prove that Ariosto was a greater poet than Homer, so Lady Northcote had challenged Mr Gladstone to a comparison of Homer with Tasso. Concerning this her husband wrote, February 23, 1857:—

I like your criticism on Tasso very much, and hope you will complete it for Gladstone's benefit, as you are sure of a characteristic reply from him. You must bear in mind that the subject of the Iliad is not the siege of Troy, and that in point of fact Troy is not taken in it. Homer concentrates your interest on the individual Hector among the Trojans, just as Tasso does upon the individuals Clorinda, Armida, and others among the Pagans. Again when you speak of the beauty of particular passages in Tasso, you must recollect that you have not the means of comparing them with particular passages in Homer, and at least you must compare Hook's or Hunt's translation (and not the original Italian) with Pope's miserable version of Homer. Subject to these cautions, I think you may make something of a case for Tasso. A strict comparison is not admissible, because the subjects are different,—the wrath of Achilles is not the same kind of subject as the siege of Jerusalem. Rinaldo is a poor creature, and you must give him up; but in Tancred you have a fine character of a Christian warrior and a chivalrous knight to set against the pagan heroism of Achilles. In so far as the Gerusalemme is the development of character, Tancred is by far the most important personage in it, and there are many points in which he contrasts favourably with Achilles. Of course the

question is not which of two heroes one likes best, but which of the two poets describes best. The character of Achilles, whether you like him or not, is wonderfully drawn. Is that of Tancred equally so? As regards Helen and Armida, Gladstone disputes Helen's being a consenting party to her original abduction, but she appears to have acquiesced in it by the time the poem commences, and does not, I think, show any desire to return to Menelaus. She is, however, very skilfully treated, and kept in subordination to the plot; and no attempt is made to create any interest in her beyond a gentle pity, not wholly unmixed with a feeling that she is partly to be blamed, while Paris is always held up as contemptible. Armida, on the other hand, is thrust upon our notice, and all the blots in her character are patent.

To call Pope's Homer "miserable" is, no doubt, to speak hastily, as in a private note, not in a public essay. The rhetoric of Homer's speeches has always an incomparable rendering in the famous English version. But in the many passages where Homer is not rhetorical, doubtless we feel in Pope a lack of the magic, the simplicity, the truth of the "Ionian father of the rest," the first and greatest of all poets. In comparison with him, what translation is not "miserable"? Mr Gladstone, in his apology for Helen, has omitted, I think, the curious tradition in Eustathius which tells us that Paris deceived her, as Uther, Arthur's father, deceived Ygerne, by magically putting on the shape and semblance of her husband. Perhaps Homer knew this tradition, and alludes to it, where Penelope, after the slaughter of the wooers, still declines to recognise Odysseus.

What manner of writer Lord Iddesleigh might have been if literature had conquered in his mind the attractions of politics, it is impossible to say. His position made it wholly needless for him to adopt literature either as crutch or staff. He had not that studious fervour which compelled Gibbon, Mr Grote, and other men like them, to live laborious days of learned application. When he wrote it was either on some political or social question in the 'Quarterly Review,' for example, or for the purpose of pleasing his friends at Exeter, or his undergraduates at Edinburgh, or, finally, for his own diversion and the

diversion of his children at home.¹ His lecture at Exeter on "Nothing" was a most successful and playful *tour de force*, and the more original, as he doubtless knew nothing of a rare work on the same topic by "Nobody," a book of the early part of the century. Nobody could have spoken better on "Nothing," a topic which might even have taxed the practised ingenuity of Swift.

The latest of all Lord Iddesleigh's essays in pure literature was interrupted by his death. It was of a character not familiar to him, the editing for the Roxburghe Club of "The Triumphs of Petrarch," a reprint of the translation by Henry Parker, Lord Morley, of 1554. The Roxburghe Club is an association of bibliophiles, and was founded in memory of the great collector immortalised by "Froggy Dibdin." Lord Iddesleigh was elected in 1885: though a lover of books, he could not be called a bibliophile, still less a bibliomaniac. His library was that of a reader, a student, not of a collector. It contains hardly any rarities, and might perhaps be ransacked in vain for scarce examples "on large paper," for first editions, and bindings by Derome, Le Gascon, Padeloup. But, having been elected to the Roxburghe Club, he determined to do his duty therein, and set to work on his edition of Morley's "Triumphs of Petrarch" from a transcript once in the possession of the late Mr Payne Collier, the well-known Shakespearean. Two days before his death, when on the point of leaving Pynes for London, he said to Lady Iddesleigh, "When these few days are over, I shall take up my preface to 'The Triumphs of Petrarch.'"

In a note by Mr Berkley, Vice-President of the Roxburghe Club, he says that Lord Iddesleigh probably chose Lord Morley's old work under the influence of his "strong Devonshire feeling, he being apparently under the impression that the Parker, Lord Morley of the Tudor period, was in some way connected with the noble Devonshire family now bearing the same name and title." The pres-

¹ It was no doubt to oblige a friend and former secretary of his own, Mr Marwood Tucker, that he wrote at one time in the 'Globe.' Mr Tucker mentions that Lord Iddesleigh asked him to cut about his articles as freely as if they were those of the youngest contributor.

ent Lord Morley, however, disclaims any traceable connection between his name and that of the old translator of the "Triumphs of Petrarch," who remarks, "I thoughte in my mynde howe I, beynge an Englishe man, myght do as well as the Frenche man," the author of an earlier version. And yet this Englishman could call the tale of Robin Hood "some dongehyll matter" in comparison with Petrarch. From this view Lord Morley's editor would probably have dissented, but, unfortunately, a few notes on the influence of Petrarch on European literature are all that Lord Iddesleigh has left. The "Triumphs" were presented by his son, the present Earl of Iddesleigh, to the Roxburghe Club.

Thus literature, on the whole, was his pleasure, his diversion, his consolation. But it never could well have been his business. "To live in ease and tranquillity may be man's wish," he says in an early essay (1840), "but it can never be the legitimate object of his life; nay, if he aim at it as an end, he will in all probability miserably fail." He certainly never made the "passionless bride, divine tranquillity," his choice; but took his part in the fray, declining "that which is too often the object of the purely literary man, individual and selfish pleasure." Nor was Art a matter of great moment to him.

Though he had much to do with fostering schools of art, and had devoted attention to them since his tour of inspection in 1849, Lord Iddesleigh, in his correspondence, seldom says much about pictures as they affected himself. I extract the following description of the Royal Academy in 1865, from a letter to Lady Iddesleigh, written after the private view.

Mary and I have been to the Exhibition this morning, and thought it a good one. There is an excellent portrait of Sir E. Landseer by himself, with two dogs looking over his shoulder and criticising his painting. Also there is a good Marks of "Beggars are coming to town." There are some Millais which I like pretty well. I think the best is a Joan of Arc; and there is a striking but disagreeable one of the enemy sowing tares, with a sky something like that in the gravedigging nuns. It is a

wonderful contrast to a beautiful, sunny, simple, but expressionless picture by Herbert of the man sowing the good seed. They are not in the same room. I almost wish they were. Then there is a dear little thing by O'Neill, called the "Anxious Mother," representing Peg sitting by a bed in which she has put four dolls to sleep (with their eyes wide open), and holding up her finger to enjoin silence. There are some wonderful pieces of colour by Leighton—one of Helen of Troy, which I should admire if it were intended to represent a statue of her, for the effect is as of marble flesh, marble drapery, &c., well coloured and very lifelike, for marble. There is a bull-fight scene by Burgess, not representing the fight, but the people looking on at a critical point, which I thought very clever; but Lady Eastlake was disgusted with me, and said that was not art. There is a delicious Hook, "The Seaweed-Gatherer"; and there is a picture called the "Marble Seat," by that young Moore, which I thought very good indeed, in point of drawing, though the absurd effect of pre-Raphaelite daisies and checkered lights spoils it.

The personal appearance of Lord Iddesleigh was for many years familiar to most people from his portraits, and from the excellent drawings of Mr Tenniel and Mr Sambourne, in 'Punch.' He was of rather more than middle height, of complexion extremely fair, with blue eyes, and with a beard, worn after a bumping ball from a bowler on a rural wicket cut open his lip. Phrenologists and artists are said to have seen in his head some resemblance (which I confess that I cannot discover) to the head of Sir Walter Scott. The brow, the "peak" of old Sir Peveril, was of a commanding altitude, and a shape which survives in one of his descendants, though seldom met with among men. But, if this resemblance was fanciful, it may be a less arbitrary imagination which detects in Lord Iddesleigh's character and ways certain likenesses to those of the author of 'Waverley.' What these two men, so unlike in genius and in career, possessed in common were the characteristics of the best sort of country gentlemen,—the love of books, and "desultory" reading; the retentive memory; the liking for country anecdotes, and the art of telling them well; the fondness for sports, and for military exercises; old-world loyalty, generosity, a certain large way of living; and a singular goodness,

kindness, and loyalty of disposition. It is perhaps this last and most important note of character which has most frequently brought back, to a reader of Lord Iddesleigh's domestic letters, the character of Scott. But in many ways I have seemed to see, in the younger man, the Devonian, with Border blood in his veins, traces, as it were, of a family likeness to the great Borderer. Both were undeniably akin in this, that they loved their country well, and their own country-side, if possible, better. This local patriotism was not less strong in the owner of Pynes than in the scion of Harden's line. But Lord Iddesleigh, unlike Scott, was little of an antiquary. The house of Pynes, built under William and Mary or Anne, has nothing romantic. Here is no Border keep, frowning over the dark and narrow glen where Harden kept the cattle of his Southern neighbours, or even of Elibank. There is little to foster archæological tastes; there are few or no legends, no memories of feud and fray. The neighbourhood boasts some Roman remains of a summer camp; but has by no means that richness in tradition and in relics of every age which inspired Scott beside the Catrail, or near Newark, or Smailholme Tower. A taste for heraldry was almost the only archæological taste of Lord Iddesleigh's. The traditions of his family had also their interest, and we have extracted a passage from a letter about that curious old card-table which is thought to record an ancestral victory at cards.

Even if the old Justice Northcote of the story was a gambler, "a plunger," Sir Stafford did not inherit the passion with the farm. He was very fond of almost all games, but he speaks disparagingly about his own performances at whist. He may not have been a worse player than Mr Forster, but he played in much less exacting company. He mentions having won a good many points from Lord Houghton, and "hopes he will be paid"; but the points were probably the domestic sixpences. He was also attached to piquet, and to the oracles of Patience, which he was rather addicted to consulting. Once Patience foretold that the poor Prince who fell in Zululand would inherit the throne of France—a very unlucky guess.

Charades and acrostics were also favourite diversions of Lord Iddesleigh's leisure; they are amusements almost too active for intelligences easily fatigued, but he was as skilled in making as in solving acrostics. As to athletic sports, he was fond of all of them, but distinguished in none. He once showed Lady Iddesleigh the place in Windsor Forest where he and Colonel Anstruther Thomson of the Fifeshire Hounds used to set springs for pheasants. All boys, all natural people, are sportsmen, and born poachers. He did not take to shooting much till he was thirty, and as his eye was never very good, he was not a crack shot. The same defect was inconvenient, as it made him slow to recognise faces, and, as hath already been mentioned, prevented him from excelling as a cricketer, though he encouraged the village club, played in country matches, and commemorated the feats of Mr Webbe and Mr Alfred Lyttleton in verse. He was an excellent runner in his youth, and it seems not unlikely that the beginning of a weakness of the heart was caused by his running swiftly down a steep descent in the Lake Country, with his oldest boy on his shoulder (1849).

As becomes a country gentleman, he was interested in farming: he wrote a short treatise on "the Draining of Catch Meadows"; he was on the council of the Royal Agricultural Society, and steward of cattle (1855, 1856) at Carlisle and Chelmsford.

Hunting was his chief winter pastime. He was not a scientific pursuer, but he delighted in the perils of the chase, and he might even be described as a reckless rider. His plan was "to throw his heart over first," and his favourite horse, an extremely accomplished fencer named Nimrod, usually managed the rest. Nimrod was his favourite mount in 1860, when one finds careful injunctions as to warming his loose-box: "Perhaps it would be a good plan, if he does go into the box on the first night, to let White Rook stand by the stall by its side, in the same stable, so as to warm the air a bit." He was master of the Pynes Harriers,—the Hunt wore a green coat with brass buttons, marked P.H.,—and a writer in

the 'Sporting Times' (February 5, 1887) remarks that "few rode straighter to hounds than the master in his spectacles." The same writer mentions how his own horse, "a big powerful brute," once cannoned against Sir Stafford, and knocked old Nimrod against a gate. "Of course I expected to be greeted with some such remark as, 'Where the devil are you riding to?' but no; Sir Stafford never lost his self-control. He simply said 'Take care,' though most masters would have 'sworn at large.'" After old Nimrod died, and was honourably buried, his master hunted but little. The description of his recklessness in his saddle once more reminds one of him to whom Archibald Park said: "Shirra, ye'll never rest till they bring you hame feet foremost!"

In the life at Pynes, as of old at Ashestiel or Abbotsford, there was a happy tenacity of old traditional usages, a friendly and feudal hospitality to tenants as well as to friends. The mummers still came round at Christmas with their play, and the Yule-log was lighted, with an accompaniment of "wishes," as at the Scottish sports of Hallowe'en.

In addition to his Devonshire tales, Sir Stafford was a great *raconteur* of fairy stories to children. Of *them* he was unaffectedly fond, and they knew it, and would severely tax his memory or invention. From babies upwards he had a tender heart for all young people. At the close of his life, on a wet day, he was amusing some children with stories. The rain ceased. "The clouds have stopped to hear grandpapa," said one of the little audience.

He had a very unusual understanding and tolerance of the characters of boys. This showed itself even when he had just ceased to be a boy himself, in his advice as to the studies and treatment of a younger brother at Eton. Several of his letters to his sisters, when they were all young, to his sons in his later life, were intended to make easy and plain some difficult points in French grammar and French history. Thus, on September 20, 1860, we find him encouraging his son Harry to try for a French prize at school, and giving intelligible rules for the declen-

sion of the past participle, and the use of the definite article, also for *de* and *du*, the despair of Englishmen. No lessons could be more lucid and helpful. Girls found him as good company and as sympathetic as boys. He was reading bits of 'Pickwick' to children when he received the telegram which asked if he would accept a minor office, after leaving the control of foreign affairs. He glanced at the message, answered, "No, I think not," and went on reading 'Pickwick' aloud.

The stories he told children were sometimes traditional, sometimes were adapted to infant minds from the 'Arabian Nights,' the 'Iliad,' and the 'Odyssey.' The last poem he knew almost by heart, for he had the memory of a Rhapsode.

Of his kindness to children, which was extended even to babies, it is told that when one of his elder children was an infant, and in bad health, the nurse who attended the child had brought with her a baby of her own. This was a most pessimistic and wailing baby, whom nobody could soothe. Lord Iddesleigh took it in his arms and walked up and down with it for many weary hours in the night, and after a hard day's work, so anxious was he that his own child should have the necessary quiet, and that the other should not suffer from neglect. It would be endless to repeat similar traits of kindness, which was so universal that Lord Iddesleigh, when suffering from a cold, once made a long speech, chiefly because one of the reporters had incurred a good deal of expense in preparations for telegraphing it to town.

This kindness and gentleness became even prejudicial to Lord Iddesleigh in politics. "The meaning of 'gentle' is equivocal at best," wrote Charles Lamb to Coleridge once, "and almost always means poor-spirited." No charge could be less true of Lord Iddesleigh than the charge of poor-spiritedness. But some men, like the Dandie Dinmonts defended by Dr John Brown, are too full of goodness of heart to enjoy fighting for its own sake, and Lord Iddesleigh was not combative enough for some members of his party. As an example of his calmness in personal danger, we may quote a letter in which

he describes to Lady Iddesleigh his sensations during a railway accident:—

I hope you got my telegram from Swindon before you heard of the accident. I was afraid it would appear in this morning's paper, and that you would be alarmed. I am really not hurt; but it was a considerable shake, and I am a little stiff and headachy. We ran into a goods train about two and a half miles from Swindon, and our engine crashed into it at almost full speed (the goods train was stationary), and rose like a horse at a fence, falling over on its side into the field. Wonderful to relate, the men on the engine escaped with some bruises and a great shake; they clung to the engine and fell with it. The rest of the train was dragged off the rails, but not off the embankment, and we were all jerked violently forward. A great many of the passengers were cut and bruised, and one was very seriously hurt, having several of his ribs broken, as we believe, and perhaps his thigh also. The guard was a good deal hurt. I was half asleep when the shock came, and was woke up by finding myself flying forward, and hearing a great crash behind me. Happily for the gentleman opposite me I had a soft cap, and as I only grazed his face I did not hurt him much. Major Kirk, who was sitting next me, went straight into his opposite neighbour's face and cut his lip through, but was not hurt himself. The accident happened at 8.15 P.M., and it was 12.15 A.M. before we were got away, and more than 3.30 before we reached London, when I got a bed at the Paddington Hotel and slept till 8, and then made my way to Harley Street and got breakfast. It was a merciful escape; and really when one wandered about among those masses of *débris* covering the line, and saw the engine lying on its side in the field, and people going about tying up their heads and asking for wine and brandy, and all looking scared, one could not but feel how good God had been in averting more mischief. It was happily fine, that is, it did not rain; but it was very dark, and we poked about with lanterns at first, and afterwards lighted great bonfires of the broken carriages. A train was sent from Swindon to take us on board, and we got there pretty well tired, and so much done that I actually swallowed a basin of Swindon soup. It was (to me) the worst part of the accident. There ought to be a row about the affair. The goods train was allowed to leave Wotton Bassett Station 25 minutes after its time, and with an engine too weak to draw the load, and which broke down at the place where we ran into it. My first feeling was, "Well, here's my accident at last." I have always felt sure I should meet with one, and now I hope it is over.

This was one of the many accidents of his life, attributable, no doubt, to the evil influence of Saturn in his horoscope!

He was not to be intimidated by mobs. He was present at the Aston Hall disturbances in Birmingham in October 1884. On his journey, some one at Cheltenham station prophesied "Rough times at Birmingham." On arriving, with Lady Iddesleigh, at the hotel next Aston Park, they learned that a Liberal crowd had broken down the wall of the park, and was breaking up the meeting. Lord Randolph Churchill came in and said that it was vain to try to speak. Sir Stafford went into the hall, however, where Lord Randolph joined him; but the ladies thought discretion the better part, and attended another meeting in the hotel. The windows of the room where they had been were broken by the Liberal multitude, and presently the ladies were joined by Sir Stafford. He had found a great uproar in the larger assembly, the furniture in ruins, and the audience singing "Rule Britannia." In this musical exercise he joined, and then Sir Stafford tried to speak. The uproar could not be combated—though he thought it was mainly horse-play, and not very malicious—and his friends hurried him from the hall. He only felt nervous about catching his feet in the wires that protected the flower-beds, as he went through the garden in the dark. The crowd was rather offensive as they drove away; but Colonel Burnaby drew off its attention by smoking a cigar under a lamp-post. "His attitude," says Lady Iddesleigh, "standing quietly smoking and 'chaffing' while the crowd around were hooting, was calculated to reassure the most timid." The whole story is more to the credit of Sir Stafford and his friends than flattering to the chivalry of their opponents.

Such was Lord Iddesleigh in his private life, and in his studies. In a country "tired of squires," he gave one an example of what a squire might be. A man of letters, of affairs, a man of courage and of courtesy, a lover of his own country, and of his own country-side, he was tolerant, candid, no seeker of his own interest, ambitious

only in the lines of duty and rectitude. The age for which he was fitted ended ere he died, but he did not live to see the new tumult at its worst. It is pleasant to remember that one of the very latest entries in his last diary mentions a meeting with Mr Gladstone, who was friendly, and gave him some of his books on Homer. It was only in that ancient and imperishable fairy world of the past that the old friendship of these two men could live on, in the old Homeric custom of presenting gifts. A writer in the 'Times' has suggested as "the apt classical epitome of Lord Iddesleigh's character, La Bruyère's description of the man of perfect courtesy of soul, the man who by word, deed, and conduct always strove to make others content with themselves and with him."

One who knew Lord Iddesleigh his whole life long has chosen, as singularly true of him, the words in which Marcus Aurelius the Emperor describes the character of Antoninus:—

Remember his constancy in every act which was conformable to reason, and his evenness in all things, and his piety, and the serenity of his countenance, and his sweetness, and his disregard of empty fame, and his efforts to understand things, and how he would never let anything pass without having first most carefully examined it and clearly understood it; and how he bore with those who blamed him unjustly, without blaming them in return; how he did nothing in a hurry, and how he listened not to calumnies; not given to reproach people, nor timid, nor suspicious, nor a sophist; with how little he was satisfied, such as lodging, bed, dress, food, servants; how laborious and patient; how sparing he was in his diet; his firmness and uniformity in his friendships; how he tolerated freedom of speech in those who opposed his opinions; the pleasure that he had when any man showed him anything better; and how pious he was without superstition.

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